

A LOOK AT THE EVENTFUL LIFE OF A SURF PHOTOGRAPHER • HOW GOOD IS SNAPSEED NOW?



SOUTH ASIA'S ONLY
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May 2015 • Rs. 150
(Total 160 pages)

INSIDE
AN EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE ON THE
ART OF CELLPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Insight. Better Pictures



RICOH WG-M1

There's a new
waterproof action
camera in town!

THE ART OF MAKING COMPELLING FRAMES

13 lensmen share the stories & secrets
behind their award-winning photographs

EXCLUSIVE TESTS

Sigma 24mm f/1.4 DG HSM
Tamron SP 15-30mm f/2.8 VC

GREAT MASTERS

Augustus Washington's awe
inspiring personal struggle

ON ASSIGNMENT

Examining the masquerades
played publicly and privately

CELLPHONE PROFILE

Amit Mehra speaks on the effect
of cellphones on our daily-lives

PROFILE

Manish Mamtani's love affair
with starry night skies and more

Network

18

Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Insight. Better Pictures

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Publishing

President & Editorial Director, TV18
Senthil Chengalvarayan

Editor-in-chief, Web & Publishing, Network18
R Jagannathan

EDITORIAL
Chief Editor

K Madhavan Pillai

Deputy Editor-Technical
Shridhar Kunte

Senior Features Writers
Ambarin Afsar, Supriya Joshi, Aditya Nair

Features Writers
Conchita Fernandes,
Natasha Desai

Senior Editor-Online
Sanjay Yalavatti

DESIGN & PRODUCTION
Assistant Art Director
Santosh D Kamble
Mahesh A Jadhav

MARKETING & SALES
Vice President Sales & Marketing
Amit Seth
National Sales Head

Badri Narayan: 9845045008
New Delhi
Harshvardhan Verma: 9899555090
Rajat Chauhan: 9868103422

Mumbai
Jyoti Kapoor: 9820056212
Senior Sales Support Executive
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PRINTING
Manager
Dnyaneshwar Goythale

Production Team
Ravikumar Potdar, Ravi Saliyan

NEWSSTAND & SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

For newsstand and trade queries, please write to
at customercare@network18publishing.com

For any subscription queries, please write to Sheetal
at customercare@network18publishing.com

To subscribe to Better Photography online,
visit <http://eshop.infomedia18.in>

ADVERTISING SERVICES

For advertising and sales queries, please write to
umesh.desai@network18publishing.com

HEAD OFFICE

Network18 Media & Investments Ltd,
"One Indiabulls Centre" Unit No. 501, 5th floor,
Tower-I Jupiter Textile Mills, Senapati Bapat
Marg, Elphinstone Road, Mumbai-400 016,
Maharashtra, India.

Customercare No-33634760 | 4562

Email: customercare@network18publishing.com

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Participate in online contests, share your best tips and techniques to get your work noticed. Follow these simple guidelines:

For Your Pictures, Reader's Gallery and Reader's Tip:

- Visit <http://betterphotography.in/contests> and register yourself on the website
- Participate in the relevant contests on the page. There will always be a contest open for you to take part in!
- For Reader's Gallery contests, make sure the images have been made using a cellphone
- For Reader's Tip and Your Pictures contests, include a 100-word note on how and why you shot the image
- Winners of all the contests get featured on our website and can be featured in the magazine too. They will also receive special prizes!

Send in a synopsis, with low-resolution images for viewing, to contribute articles to the following sections:

On Assignment, Step-by-Step, Photofeature, Tips & Tricks, Shooting Technique, History, Story Behind the Picture

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- To showcase your best photographs: entries@betterphotography.in
- To contribute articles and for questions on photography: editor@betterphotography.in
- For your suggestions, appreciation and criticism on the magazine: feedback@betterphotography.in

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Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

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EDITORIAL

**...where more
is understood
in an instant
of relating
quietly within
the confines of
a frame.**



Staring Through a Viewfinder

The eyes are the windows to the soul, so it is said. With our societal conditioning, and during all our frantic efforts to say things and to be heard, how often is it that we really look a person in the eye? Those who study interpersonal behaviour know that we watch the mouths of people more than the eyes when we listen to them speak, even during one-to-one conversations. We make eye-contact easily enough though, several times a minute. In fact, research

indicates that the more familiar we are with someone, the number of times we look at his or her eyes increase. But do we really 'look' at them?

It is during the silent exchanges that eyes are met and things are shared so powerfully and meaningfully, without the need for words. That is photography... a silent communion through the viewfinder... our personal window to the world so that we may see its soul... where more is understood in an instant of relating quietly within the confines of a frame.

And there is the final, most elegant form of companionship, of mutually *being* beside, with perfect understanding. No need for looking into souls... just watching the world go by. And perhaps sharing an easy, meandering colloquy. This is when we keep our cameras aside for a while. Let the shutter fall when there is something to say.

K Madhavan Pillai

K Madhavan Pillai
editor@betterphotography.in



Unidentified Woman

by Augustus Washington

Enterprising, intellectual, idealistic, and predisposed to living life the way he saw fit... by the conventions of his times, these were not qualities considered desirable for a young African American. In his own personal way, Daguerreotypist Augustus Washington confronted each of his situations with grace, turning photography into a powerful voice for the freedom of choice, that can be heard even today. Oddly enough, as a portraitist of the people who chose to live by their own rules, we will never know what Augustus Washington himself looked like. There is no known photograph of him.

**To know more about
Augustus Washington's
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DESIGN: SANTOSH D KAMBLE

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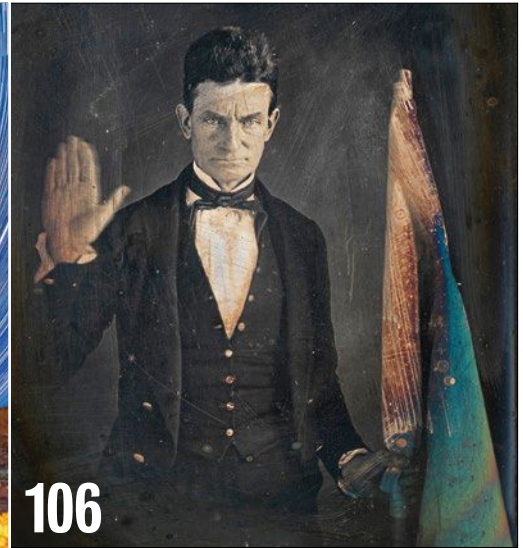
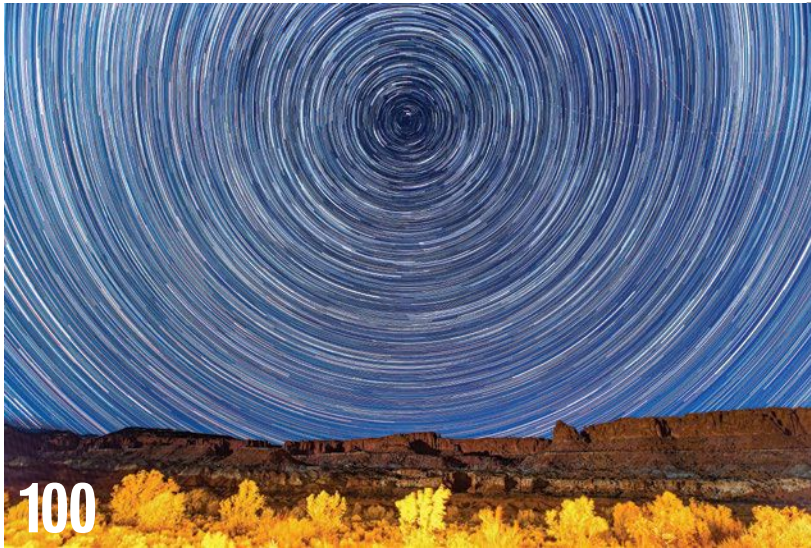
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“Technology is ever changing. If you don’t get with the times, you will be left behind.”



Priyanka Joshi

For the Love of Food!

I am a big foodie and reading the cellphone section of *Better Photography* magazine has now helped me in finding the best way to make photos of what I eat with my camraphone. This trend is not new, of course, as I have been following the works of many food photographers over the years. Truth be told, it's not easy! It amazes me that shooting just one simple photograph of food takes so much effort. Angles, light, composition... I never knew there was so much to do to make your food look appetising.

Just yesterday, my mother put out some bright red chillies to dry to make pickle from. I made a photo of the same, and I thought of sharing the photo with you... the magazine who taught me how to shoot!

Priyanka Joshi, Mumbai, via email

The Learning Never Ends

I am a 68-year-old hobbyist photographer, who first picked up a camera almost 30 years ago. I feel that they were simpler times, where all I had to concern myself was with winding the film and releasing the shutter. I read as many photography periodicals and books I could find at my local library, which, to be honest, were not a lot, but I learned as much as I could.

Time flies, and we are smack in the middle of the digital age, and if you don't get with the times, you will be

➔ In her pursuit of learning food photography, *Better Photography* reader Priyanka Joshi sent us this image.

left behind. Now, there is so much more to photography and for someone my age, technology just keeps getting more and more complex. Still, I have taken to the internet and I read as many photo websites as I can, one of them being *Better Photography's*. The simple language used to explain concepts is a boon for me. Today I learned about making HDRs in black and white, and I am quite eager to try shooting them myself!

Shravan Das, Guwahati, via email

Finding Inspiration

I am a 15-year-old reader of the magazine, and have been reading *Better Photography* for the last five years. Every article featured in *BP* takes me on a magical journey of awe and learning galore. Sarang Naik's On Assignment 'These Walls of Mine' (April 2015) was particularly impactful for me, as it made me find inspirations in the walls of my own apartment. This article has helped spark a more creative approach to shooting simple architectural structures in me. I also realised the beauty of black and white images and attempted to create something similar myself.

This photo was shot in the afternoon, while the sun was directly overhead. After a lot of thought, I decided to go for the composition in the picture. I quite liked the symmetry created by the walls, and the black and white treatment gave it a very graphical feel.

Rishi Vardhan, Chennai, via email

➔ Inspired by Sarang Naik's On Assignment, 'These Walls of Mine' (April 2015), *Better Photography* reader Rishi Vardhan made symmetry of the walls around him.



Rishi Vardhan

I Hate Instagram

There, I said it. I hate Instagram. I hate what it has become. I hate what it wants me to become. Why do I hate Instagram? It's because it's just not about photography anymore. It's about showing the world how beautiful you are, how many amazing things you own and the amount of friends you have.

Instead of a platform for sharing the amazing types of photos you can make with a cellphone, what I am subjected to is scrolls and scrolls of vapid, inane snapshots of some stranger's apparently perfect life.

This scares me... not for myself, but for the people who are actually buying into this trend. There are those who will compare their lives to others on Instagram and feel miserable about their own. Then there are those who reach the epitome of consumerism and begin spending money on things they don't need, just to show the world that they are indeed worthy of buying the product. I read somewhere that comparing your lives to others on

Instagram is like comparing others' showreels to your bloopers. They are completely incomparable. I hope more and more people realise this and hopefully start using Instagram for what it is supposed to be.

As photographers on the medium, however, what can we do to overthrow the crazy amount of vapidness that has spread across the platform? Of course, there are several amazing cellphone photographers on Instagram, but is that enough? One solution that comes to mind is to shoot more... a lot more! Initiate Insta meets and go on a lot more photo walks with fellow Instagrammers.

Social media websites are transcending, and Instagram will change and evolve too. Maybe I am coming across as a skeptic, but I'm just tired of the rather scary entity Instagram is becoming. Hopefully, this mindset will change, and I am sure that photographers are the ones who will bring about this change.

Sagar Gopi, Madurai, via email



We believe that the joy of a family photo is in displaying it. To make your special memories stand out, this **Letter of the Month** wins a special Photo Frame from Red Moments!



In Appreciation

I first purchased *Better Photography* back in November 2011, and I have been an ardent reader ever since. As my father is an army officer, we shift a lot, because of which all my issues get stacked in cartons.

After buying the April 2015 issue, I decided to hunt for those cartons. When I found them, I had the widest smile on my face... all the issues over the years, the pocket guides, they indeed are my most valuable possessions! The magazine has taught me how to see beauty in everything. I know nothing about your office, but I feel like I know everybody in the **BP** team! I have been reading the articles, reviews and interviews for such a long time, which has made me feel as if the **BP** team is part of a family to me.

Shubham Saha, via email

Nature in Black and White

First of all, the April 2015 edition of the magazine was just phenomenal. I love how the magazine pushes the boundaries and comes up with exceptional content

for us readers. Being a lover of B&W photography, I read the entire magazine with great interest. One of my favourite stories was 'Nature in Greyscale'. I had never really thought about our natural world in black and white, but now I know better. The pictures that supplemented the article were fantastic as well. The next time I visit the nature park, I will be sure to implement the tips offered by the article.

Anjum Kapur, Mumbai, via email

➔ **Nature in Greyscale (April 2015)** gave tips on how to make photos of the natural world in black and white.



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SnapShots

WHAT'S NEW

Nikon 1 J5

Nikon's low-end mirrorless camera incorporates a 1-inch 20.8MP sensor, a new image processing engine that allows a drive mode of up to 60fps, and can shoot 4k video at 15fps. It also has a more retro look than its predecessor, and a 180° tilting LCD, WiFi/NFC and HD video at 120fps.

Sony's New Pocketable Travel Compacts

The Cyber-shot DSC-HX90V and DSC-WX500 are two pocketable superzoom cameras for travel enthusiasts. They use an 18.2MP



BSI-CMOS sensor, 30x (24–720mm equivalent) zoom lens, OIS, 3" upward tilting LCD, a control ring, 1080/60p video with the XAVC S codec, and Wi-Fi/NFC.

The company claims that these are the world's smallest cameras of their kind, and also have a pop-up EVF similar to the one seen in the RX100M3. They cost USD 430 (approx. Rs. 27,000) and USD 330 (approx. Rs. 21,000) respectively.

Garmin Action Cameras

Navigation and fitness tracker manufacturer Garmin showcased two new cameras, the VIRB X and the VIRB XE that come with a 1-inch LCD. The newly designed form factor should help increase the number of mounts that can be attached to the cameras. Both cameras shoot 12MP stills.

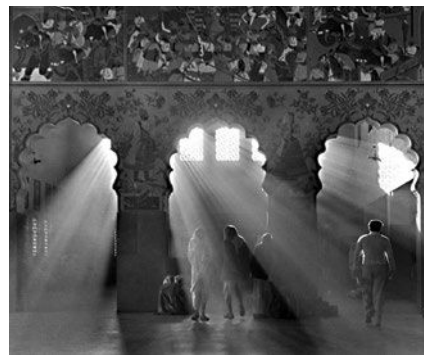


While the XE can shoot up to 1440p30 or 1080p60 video and has image stabilisation, the X is limited to 1080p30 video. The XE also has a pro mode for exposure controls, colour profiles, white balance and sharpness. According to the company, the microphone has been updated for clearer audio, both in and out of water. The cameras are priced at USD 299 (approx. Rs. 19,000) and USD 399 (approx. Rs. 25,000) respectively.

13 Photographers Awarded at the NPA

The results of the fourth National Photography Awards, organised by the Photo Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, were declared on 21 March. The Life Time Achievement Award went to Surendra R Patel. He is an expert in using 120mm film and is currently the President of Niharika Ahmedabad—The Gujarat Pictorialist Society, and has also served as the Chairperson of Colour Division Federation of India Photography.

Swarup Duta and R Sasikumar won the Professional and Amateur Photographer of the Year, whose themes were *Hamara Bharat Swachh Bharat* and *Mother and Child*, respectively. Special Mentions in the Professional category included Jayesh Navinchandra Shah, Atul Vasant Ghag, Pravin Rawat, Arvind Kumar Jain and Umesh Nikam.



Surendra R Patel

In the Amateur category the honourable mentions were Joydeep Mukherjee, Akhil Hardia, Nimai Chandra Ghosh, Mukesh J Thakkar, Tabeenah Anjum Qureshi. Bimal Julka, Secretary, I&B who presented the awards, said that they were meant to be salutations to the greatest and the best from photography.



R Sasikumar

“ Photography is a love affair with life. ”

BURK UZZLE (1938)

Burk Uzzle's photographs are often a blend of American culture, along with the individuality of the people and places he chooses as his subjects. He holds the title of being the youngest photographer ever hired by *LIFE* magazine, at the age of 23. For 15 years, Uzzle was a part of Magnum and served as its President from 1979 to 1980. His most recognisable works are of Woodstock, the assassination and funeral of Martin Luther King Jr and of Cambodian war refugees.



www.burkuzzle.com

WHAT'S NEW

Olympus Stylus Tough TG-4

The new Olympus rugged compact flagship will now be RAW capable. Besides this the camera seems to have the same specs as its predecessor, the TG-3—a 16MP BSI CMOS sensor, a 25–100mm equivalent f/2.0–4.9 zoom lens. It is also waterproof up to 15m, crushproof up to 100kg, shockproof up to 2.1m and freezeproof up to -10° C. It will cost USD 379 (approx. Rs. 24,000).

**Fujifilm XF 16mm f/1.4 R WR**

The XF 16mm f/1.4 (24mm equivalent) is a weather resistant wide angle prime lens designed for Fujifilm's X-series cameras. Its salient features include a nine-blade aperture, flare-reducing Nano-GI coating, and a minimum focusing distance of 0.15m. It also has a manual aperture ring and depth-of-field scale.

**Lensbaby Velvet 56mm f/1.6**

The Velvet 56mm is a portrait lens with a 1:2 magnification and minimum focusing distance of 5-inches. According to Lensbaby, "the lens produces 'soft, glowing' effects at brighter apertures for a 'velvety' quality, what the lens is named after." It will be priced at USD 499 (approx. Rs. 31,000).

**Samyang 100mm f/2.8 Macro**

This lens from Samyang and Rokinon has a 1:1 magnification and a 1 foot minimum focusing distance. On the features side, the lens uses Ultra Multi-Coating to reduce flare and ghosting, rounded nine-blade diaphragm for soft bokeh, a non-rotating filter mount, a single high refractive index element and an extra-low dispersion element. It is priced at USD 549 (approx. Rs. 34,000).

Two New Launches from Microsoft

Microsoft rolled out two new smartphones in India—Microsoft Lumia 640 XL Dual SIM and Microsoft Lumia 640 Dual SIM.

In terms of imaging capabilities, the Lumia 640 features an 8MP camera, while the 640 XL features a 13MP one. Lumia 640, priced at Rs. 11,999, is being sold exclusively on Flipkart, while the Lumia 640 XL is available across all channels at Rs. 15,799.

**Kuangren Macro Twin Flash KX-800**

The Chinese manufacturer Venus Optics introduced a double-headed macro flash unit—the Kuangren Macro Twin Flash KX-800. The flash gun uses a pair of flash heads on extending flexible arms. They produce a combined output that has a guide number of 190-feet or 58 meters at ISO 100, which the company claims is the highest in the world for such a device. A third arm that houses an LED light will help photographers when focusing becomes critical. It will cost USD 279 (approx. Rs. 17,500).

The Beginning of a New Camera Segment?

The newly introduced Canon XC10 is not a compact camera with great video specifications, neither is it a video camcorder that can shoot stills. In fact, it may just be at an entirely new camera segment dedicated to multimedia artists.

The camera uses a 1-inch sensor that can shoot 12MP stills and 4k video. An in-built function lets you pull 8MP photographs from 4k video. The 5-axis image stabilisation (video only), a maximum ISO sensitivity of 20,000 and a built-in optically stabilized 24–240mm f/2.8–f/5.6 equivalent zoom should be of interest to the video photographer. The camera also features a rotating grip, which gives it a rather interesting look, a tilting LCD, and

built-in WiFi. The camera still remains relatively small despite having dimensions of 4.9 x 4 x 4.8 inches and weighing 1kg. It will be available for USD 2499 (approx. Rs. 1.5 lakhs).

The updated EOS C300 Mark II Digital Cinema Camera was also announced. The camera has a new 8.85MP full frame sensor, capable of shooting 4k video. The new Dual DIGIC DV5 processors will let users record 10-bit 4:2:2 4K (UHD or DCI) video internally, using the new XF-AVC Codec. Canon also claims improvements in dynamic range, handling and ruggedness. It will be launched at a price of USD 20,000 (approx. Rs. 12.5 lakhs).



Instagram Updates Guidelines, Adds New Editing Tools

Recently, Instagram has been in the news quite a bit. The company caused an uproar after banning an image of a woman on her period, by artist, Rupri Kaur. The image was part of a photo series, "about menstruation to demystify and destigmatise

the female body," according to the artist. The photograph was deleted twice despite not breaking any of the community rules which include – copyright violation, nudity or spam. The company has since apologised calling the deletion 'accidental'.

Since then Instagram has updated its community guidelines. While the policies haven't changed, the language has been updated to emphasise violating copyrights. A major problem for Instagram photographers has always been having their images stolen.

Around this time, an updated version of the app also added two new editing tools—Color and Fade. Color lets users choose one out of eight colours to the shadows and highlights. With Fade, users can soften the overall look and colours of a photograph.



Rupri Kaur

EVENTS

21 March–10 May

Time Present

National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai

Time Present—Photography from the Deutsche Bank Collection is a travelling exhibition across Asia. It currently has about 60 photographer's work on display, which have been collected by Deutsche Bank in the past 30 years.

31 March–30 May

Core Crimson

Dakshina Chitra, Chennai



Gita

Painter and filmmaker Gita, has focused her vision on creating photographs with a special emphasis on temple sites covered in the colour crimson.

14 April–8 May

Glimpses of Hungarian Wildlife

Hungarian Information and Cultural Center, New Delhi



Jozsef Mesterhazi

Passionate forester and photographer Jozsef Mesterhazi's wildlife and nature photographs from the Bakony mountains and the Lake Balaton regions of Hungary, are on display.

16 April–7 May

Saibal Das—Before the Birth of Time

Sua House, Bengaluru



Saibal Das

Tasveer is currently exhibiting photographer Saibal Das' black and white work, which deals with the visual exploration and understanding of 'some of the most significant yet shrouded pilgrimage sites, spiritual ideologies and religious practices in India.'

PRO TALK

Urbex refers to the exploration of decaying and derelict buildings. This growing trend relies heavily on photography and historical documentation.

Apple Buys LinX, to Revolutionize Mobile Photography

LinX, an Israeli camera module manufacturer, was purchased by Apple for USD 20 million (approx. Rs. 125 crores). The company is said to be building, "multi aperture imaging technology" to combine the sensor, processing algorithms and optics to improve performance. Dual lens modules have been seen in phones like the

HTC One M8 and the Honor 6 Plus to create the look of shallow depth of field.

The technology can also be used to shoot extremely high resolution images as seen in the prototype created by a startup called Light. However, LinX has gone beyond to include three and four lens modules on their website.

Sony's New Underwater Photographer is an Octopus!

For promoting their latest water resistant compact camera, the Cyber-shot TX30, Sony partnered with SEA LIFE Aquarium, Auckland, New Zealand for a project called 'The Octographer'. Rambo, the eight-legged cephalopod, was trained to photograph portraits of visitors to her aquarium using her tentacles.

"When we first tried to get her to take a photo, it only took three attempts for her to understand the process," states her

trainer, Mark Vette. "That's faster than a dog. Actually it's faster than a human in some instances."



Image Courtesy: Sony New Zealand

CALL FOR ENTRIES



➔ Submit your best photographs of British wildlife, and you could win over Rs. 4 Lakhs.

British Wildlife Photography Awards

The Competition: Professional and amateur photographers from all over the world, are invited to submit their wildlife photographs.

Categories: Animal Portraits, Animal Behaviour, Urban Wildlife, Hidden Britain, Coast and Marine, and others.

Prizes: The grand prize winner will receive 5000 pounds (approx. Rs. 4,67,955).

Website: www.bwpawards.org

Deadline: 2 May

Renaissance Photography Prize 2015

The Competition: The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers from across the globe.

Category: Single Image and Series Competition.

Prizes: The Renaissance Photography Prize 2015 for Best Single Image and Best Series will receive 1000 pounds (approx. Rs. 93,590) each, amongst other prizes.

Entry Fee: 18 pounds (approx. Rs. 1685) for the Single Image Competition and 55 pounds (approx. Rs. 5145) for the Series Competition.

Website: www.renaissancephotography.org/index.php

Deadline: 12 June

Experiential Photographer of the Year 2015

The Competition: The contest is inviting photographers to share their best inspirational travel photographs.

Prizes: The winner will be awarded a nine-day luxury safari trip to Botswana worth USD 9000 (approx. Rs. 5,60,955), and will also have the opportunity to travel with renowned photographer Neville Jones.

Entry Fee: USD 10 (approx. Rs. 625).

Website: www.experientialtravel.com.au/epoty.php

Deadline: 19 June

Global Photography Awards

The Competition: The Global Photography Awards were started to raise awareness about cancer and promote its research.

Category: Advertising, Architecture, Fine Art, Nature, People, Special and Sport.

Prizes: The grand prize winner will win the Global Photographer of the Year Crystal Trophy and USD 150,000 (approx. Rs. 93,82,575). The first, second and third prize winner will receive USD 25,000 (approx. Rs. 15,60,760), USD 20,000 (approx. Rs. 12,50,009) and USD 15,000 (approx. Rs. 9,38,255) respectively.

Entry Fee: USD 35 (approx. Rs. 2190).

Website: www.globalphotographyawards.com/

Deadline: 31 December

10–16 May Travel Photography Tour to Bhutan



Arun Bhat

Darter Photography is offering travel and photography enthusiasts the chance to visit Bhutan, and learn how to make pristine images of the landscapes and the monasteries. Photography expert Arun Bhat will be accompanying the participants. The cost of the tour is Rs. 48,500.

16 May Digital Postprocessing Workshop

Jayanagar, Bengaluru

Toehold will be conducting a digital postprocessing workshop under the mentorship of wildlife photographer Phillip Ross. Amateur and professional photographers alike will be taught basic post-production image processing skills. The fee is Rs. 4500.

16–17 May Focus Photography Workshop

Thalam Art Gallery, Bengaluru

The two-day weekend workshop will cover the basic, technical, artistic and social aspects of photography. The Basic Workshop costs Rs. 2500 and the Advance Workshop costs Rs. 3500.

22–24 May HEDVI: Seascapes Photography Tour

Chiplun, Maharashtra



Lalit Deshmukh

Landscape and Fine Art photographer Lalit Deshmukh, will be leading a photography tour where attendees will learn about the basics of landscape photography, tips on photographing seascapes and the Konkani lifestyle. There will also be a special critiquing session conducted by Deshmukh.

PRO TALK

Metadata Fields refers to information stored by the camera with respect to how an image was made. This includes the file name, exposure values, white balance, GPS location, flash and other settings. Other relevant tags or comments can also be added by the photographer.

LinkedIn Buys Lynda.com for USD 1.5 Billion

Popular online education site *Lynda.com* was sold to LinkedIn for USD 1.5 billion (approx. Rs. 9400 crores). The website is popular amongst photographers for their imaging work and Photoshop tutorials.

Through the acquisition, LinkedIn is now the proud owner of, among other videos, over 500 photography courses and 24,000 photography tutorials.

"I believe we can make it even easier for professionals around the world to

accelerate their careers and realize their potential through the learning and development of new skills," writes Ryan Roslansky, the Head of Content Products at LinkedIn.

"We are thrilled to be part of something bigger than ourselves," said founder Lynda Weinman. "We look forward to helping more people learn the skills that are needed in today's rapidly changing economic landscape," she added.

Lenny Kravitz Trains His Lens on Fans & Paparazzi

Musician Lenny Kravitz has announced a photobook, titled *Flash*. Documented using a Leica M, the comical images are from Lenny's point-of-view, as a person in the constant glare of the public eye, WHO IS hounded by paparazzi and fans. Along with this, he announced that there are a limited edition of 125 Leica M-P 'Correspondent' cameras in the works.



Lenny Kravitz

THE MONTH THAT WAS

Celebrity Chef's Culinary Voyage

Foodhall at the DLF Place Mall in New Delhi, celebrated a gastronomical journey of popular celebrity chefs—Vicky Ratnani, Aditya Bal and Pooja Dhingra. The food photography exhibition was held from 10–20 April.

Triptych Exhibition

Photographers Arzan Khambatta, Sona Bahadur and Ritan Banerjee came together to showcase their work on travel photography. The exhibition took place at the Gallery Art and Soul in Mumbai, from 10–22 April. While Bahadur's photographs focused on shapes and

patterns, Lhambatta's images revolved around finding humour in architecture and form. On the other hand, Banerjee's pictures were people oriented.

Trees by Raghu Rai—Book Launch and Exhibition

Art Alive Gallery held an exhibition and book release of renowned photographer Raghu Rai's *Trees*. The exhibition showcased Rai's ode to nature, and also consisted of a set of colour photographs that were previously never exhibited before. It was held from 14–30 April.

Death and Deliverance

Photographer Santanu Chakraborty showcased photographs from his series titled *Death and Deliverance*. When asked to talk about his work, he described it as his reflection on an embankment by the Ganges in Kolkata. The exhibition was showcased at the National Center of Performing Arts in Mumbai from 20–30 April.

Here and Now

Photographer Sumit Basu exhibited his work titled *Here and Now* at the India International Center in New Delhi. The event was held from 22–28 April, and was inaugurated by Shri Rajiv Lochan, Director, National Gallery of Modern Art. The exhibition showcased Basu's black and white photographs 'depicting the motifs in city life that speak of an underlying culture.'

➔ Bahadur mentioned that the idea for the exhibition developed over a cutting chai session, while the three photographers were going over each others work.



Abhinav Kocharekar

Moments Before the Lion Rushed the Photographer

Photographer Atif Saeed made this image of a male lion growling at him, back at a safari park in Lahore, Pakistan, in 2012. The photograph which went viral last month, was captured just moments before the angry cat charged at the photographer.

Saeed says that he was driving through the park when he spotted the lion a short distance away. Once he got close enough, Saeed began photographing the majestic



Atif Saeed

beast, thus drawing the lion's attention to where he was standing. He quickly jumped back into the open door of his car, and was able to slam it shut as the lion aggressively charged towards him. "I was laughing at that time, but now when I look back, I don't think I would be able to do it again. It was a pretty close encounter," he said. Saeed has since titled the image *The Ghost and the Darkness*.

A Camera that Runs Only on the Light it Captures

Scientists at Columbia University, led by Professor Shree K Nayar, have developed a prototype of a self-powered video camera. The unnamed camera can take photographs indefinitely, every second, in a well lit room. With each image captured, the camera harvests the light to save energy for the next photograph.

"What we have designed here is an image sensor with pixels. This new design can not only capture pictures but also generate power from the pixels, in order to capture the images themselves. That leads us to a fully powered image sensor," Nayar explained. The sensor array in this

prototype has only 30-by-40 photodiodes and the body was 3D-printed.

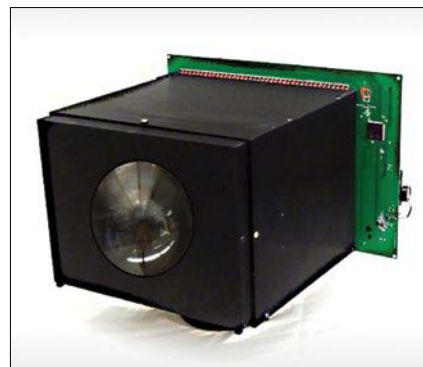


Image Source: www.ccs.columbia.edu

Syrian Child Mistakes Lens for Weapon, Surrenders

Turkish photojournalist Osman Sagirli made this portrait of a young Syrian girl, named Hudea, who he encountered back in 2014. The image shows the girl, who mistook his telephoto lens for a weapon, instinctively throwing her hands up in surrender.

Sagirli was quoted saying, "I realised she was terrified after I had taken the photo and when I later looked at the picture, I saw that she was biting her lips and had raised her hands. Normally, kids run away or hide their faces, or even smile when they see a camera."

The image was first published in the newspaper, *Türkiye*, in January. Sagirli has

worked at the publication for 25 years, covering war and natural disasters outside the country, and has since received the attention of the international audience via Twitter and other social networks.



Osman Sagirli

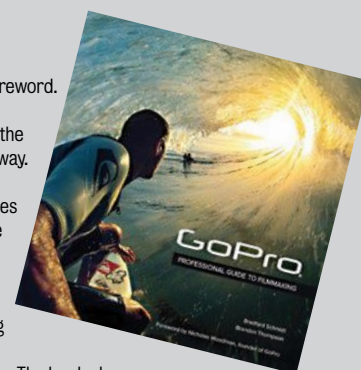
BOOK REVIEW

Title: GoPro: Professional Guide to Filmmaking
Authors: Bradford Schmidt, Brandon Thompson
ISBN: 978-0321934161
Publisher: Peachpit Press
Price: Rs. 1890

Don't Forget to Follow Your Passions...

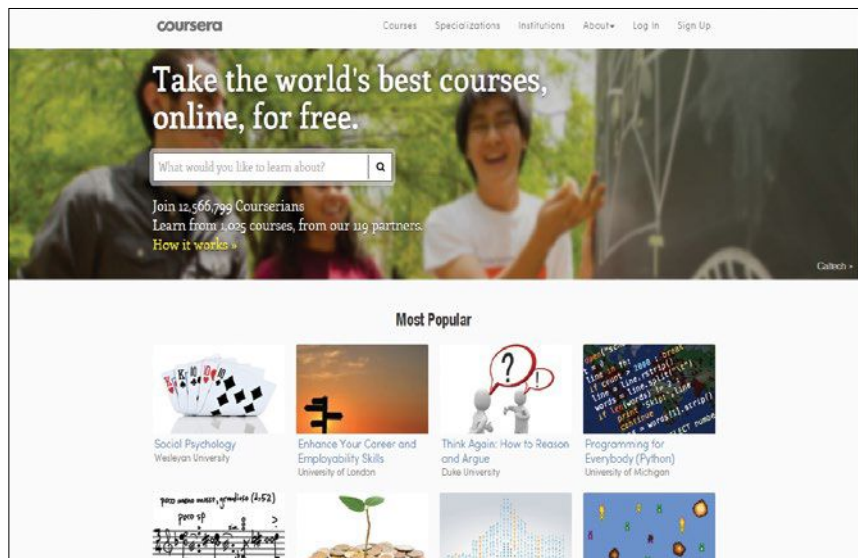
... They might just lead you to you—writes Nicholas Woodman, founder and CEO of GoPro in his foreword. Three years in the making, this book by Bradford Schmidt, GoPro's Head of Media and Brandon Thompson, their Creative Director, is a unique hybrid. It is simultaneously a fascinating insight into the camera's rise in pop culture, beginners guide for novices and also inspirational in a GoPro kind of way. It begins with simple but detailed explanations of common filmmaking jargon and how each of these terms affects the final video. Then it moves into explaining the best ways to use the features the cameras offer. Adrenaline pumping imagery keeps you hooked. The photographs include the settings and the mount used to shoot, which was an insightful addition. The book also includes the setups and mounts that professional GoPro filmmakers use, depending on the situation and subject matter—biking, skydiving, underwater, for interviews, racing being a few examples covered. Interviews with social media power users who have made a name for themselves using these cameras are also in the book.

All the fan favourites return for the book including Kevin Richardson and his love for hugging lions. The book also suggests video to watch through links and QR codes. I was disappointed that the behind the scenes from the Red Bull Stratos jump was missing though. The book is basically what a camera manual should be, and one that you will gladly pay for. Additionally, I appreciated the fact that it wasn't limited to the latest product only.



— Written by Aditya Nair

WEBSITE

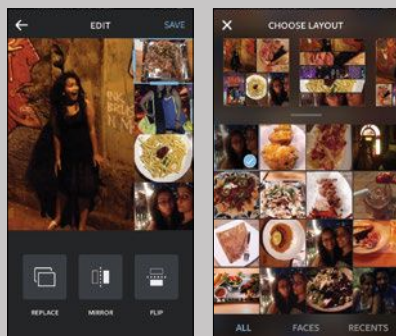


www.coursera.com

Coursera has grown to become one of the largest online education platforms today. It offers a range of various topics from the sciences, business and finance to arts, music, history and even some fun photography courses. All of these include courses that are affiliated with recognised universities from across the world. Without stepping out of your house, you can access all the videos online. If you choose so the website allows you to submit projects along with each module that is checked by either your peers or the lecturer. Quizzes, assignments and recommended reading material come as a part of each module. An active forum, which is a part of the course, lets you interact with fellow enthusiasts from across the world. The size of your class could be up to 30,000 people from. Additionally, if you complete the entire course along with the required assignments you can opt to purchase a certificate from the website for USD 50 (approx. Rs. 3200). However, it is really the knowledge that makes this website truly fascinating.

— Written by Natasha Desai

APP OF THE MONTH



Layout

Photo sharing platform Instagram released its second standalone app called Layout. While currently available for iOS only (the Android version will be released soon), the app is minimally designed collage maker, minus the bells and whistles. By this, I mean that it has no frames or border options.

As soon as you launch the app, you can see your camera roll, from where you can select up to nine photographs. Other options to select photos include a Faces tab, where only photos of people are displayed, and the self-explanatory Recent tab. As you click each photo, it gets laid out randomly in a collage setting, offering you 10 different options. I like the fact that the app gives you a small preview of what the collage will look like, without having to place each image individually. Once you decide on your preferred collage, the next step takes you to the Edit setting where you can change the size of each photo. There are also options available to mirror and flip images here. Yet another cool feature thrown in is the Photobooth, which takes up to four images with the front camera and shows you a few different collage options. Finally, since the app comes from Instagram, the UI remains incredibly simple, unlike most collage apps available today.

—Natasha Desai

How Funny is a Fake Blue Screen of Death?

Not very, if you asked some DSLR owners with firmware Magic Lantern installed. On April Fool's Day, the unofficial firmware company for Canon cameras attempted to prank their users by showing them a blue screen of death. Many users took to forums to talk about the phenomenon, believing it to be real. Once the joke was discovered as part of the installed firmware, magic Lantern's users were not a happy lot.

In some cases, lengthy blog posts filled with outrage spread across the

internet, while others shrugged it off calling it exactly what it was, a silly prank. Hopefully, never to be repeated.



Image Source: www.petapixel.com

2015 Pulitzer Winners for Photography Announced

One of journalism's highest honours, the Pulitzer, was declared on 20 April. In the *Feature Photography* category, freelance photographer Daniel Berehulak of the *New York Times* won for his coverage of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. He won a cash prize of USD 10,000 (approx. Rs. 6,30,000) for his compelling photographs from outbreak.



Berehulak found the family of the first patient who contracted the disease, as well as documenting its spread across the region before the world took notice.

In the *Breaking News Photography* category, the photography staff of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* won for their reportage on the unrest and upheaval in Ferguson, Missouri USA.



All Photographs by Daniel Berehulak

INDUSTRY VOICE

"People's lifestyles will play an important role for the consumer printing business."



Appadurai A
Country Manager,
HP Indigo and Inkjet Solutions

The consumer photography business is going through a sea change. It will be a key focus area in the coming times. If you look at the photography printing market in western world, they do 85% of their business between November and January, which is pure consumer photography. In India, we achieve similar numbers with the professional wedding market, because we started with it first, and it's grown tremendously.

The main reason for the average consumer investing in printing is because of lifestyle changes. For example – my father never went on a holiday. But in December alone, I took my family out for three vacations. When this happens, you obviously want to preserve those memories. The consumer photo printing business may not have a rapid growth just yet, but it will surely be a huge segment.

With Indigo printers, companies like ZoomIn, Vista Print, Simpress Photo Site... seek to provide a level of convenience. We have also added technology that reduces the heat in the machines by 66%. This means we can now print on plastics and polycarbonate surfaces, which is a new area in cost effective, consumer related printing. There is enough disposable money with consumers today to avail of such conveniences purely as a lifestyle choice.

— As told to K Madhavan Pillai

Canon Launches 12th Image Square in Mumbai

Andrew Koh, Senior Director, Image Communication Products Group, Canon India, launched the 12th Canon Image Square (CIS) in Mumbai, on 31 March. Along with cameras and printers, the store also offers third party photography accessories such as tripods and chargers.

At the launch, Andrew Koh said, "We intend to open three more stores in Maharashtra by May. We are eager to reach out to photography enthusiasts all over the country, and plan to build a strong bond with them through the CIS stores."



Andrew Koh, Senior Director, Canon India launched the 12th Canon Image square in Mumbai.

Konica Expands Indian Network Through MSL

Konica Minolta Business Solutions India, acquired the production printing business of Monotech Systems Ltd (MSL), a distributor for the company in India.

The company released a statement saying, "Konica Minolta will operate out of 40 locations, thus being able to provide

sales and service support to its customers."

Yuji Nakata, MD, Konica Minolta India, shared his perspective saying, "We have always endeavoured to give customer satisfaction the highest priority. The market in India has been rapidly growing and we have set ambitious targets for ourselves."

Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

www.betterphotography.in

TIPA WINNERS



Best Digital SLR Advanced
Pentax K-S2



Best CSC Advanced
Panasonic LUMIX DMC-GM5



Best Digital SLR Entry Level
Nikon D5500



Best CSC Entry Level
Sony Alpha A5100



Best Photo/Video Camera Expert
Panasonic LUMIX DMC-LX100



Best Expert Compact Camera
Fujifilm X30



Best Superzoom Camera
Nikon COOLPIX P610



Best Rugged Camera
Panasonic LUMIX DMC-FT6 (TS6)



Best Action Cam
Ricoh WG-M1



Best Easy Compact Camera
Canon IXUS 160/165/170



Best Mobile Imaging Device
Sony ILCE-QX1



Best Professional DSLR Lens
Canon EF 11-24mm f/4L USM



Best Expert DSLR Zoom Lens
Canon EF 100-400mm f/4-5.6L IS II USM



Best CSC Expert Zoom Lens
Fujinon XF 16-55mm f/2.8 R LM WR



Best Entry Level DSLR Lens
SIGMA 18-300mm f/3.5-6.3 DC MACRO OS HSM | Contemporary



Best Expert DSLR Prime Lens
SIGMA 24mm f/1.4 DG HSM | Art



Best CSC Entry Level Lens
Tamron 14-150mm f/3.5-5.8 Di III



Best CSC Prime Lens
Zeiss Loxia Line

2015 TIPA General Assembly Held in Dubai

The Technical Image Press Association (TIPA) member magazines recently convened in Dubai for their General Assembly, in May. TIPA's membership comprises of 28 leading photo and imaging magazines from 15 countries, and also has a cooperative partnership with the CJPC (Camera Journal Press Club), representing 11 top photography magazines in Japan. *Better Photography* is the only member magazine from South Asia.

The TIPA Awards are known for being the most influential photo and imaging product awards in markets around the

world. The trophies for the 25th year of TIPA Awards will be presented to the winning companies in Tokyo, Japan on 19 June.



Image Source: www.tipa.com

Our Deputy Editor-Technical, Shridhar Kunte (From the right, second row, first person) in attendance.

Stealing the Show at the TIPA Awards

Judged across 40 categories, here is a look at the best cameras available today for the professional and prosumer photographer, according to the TIPA Jury Panel.

The Pentax 645Z was awarded the Best Medium Format Camera, whose 51.2MP CMOS sensor is 1.7 times the standard full frame sensor size. The camera can deliver a burst mode of up to 3fps, an incredible ISO sensitivity of up to 2,04,800, and has a newly designed SAFOX 11 phase matching AF module containing 27 sensor points, including 25 cross-type sensors. The Best Digital SLR Professional went to the D810,

whose features include a 36.3MP sensor, ISO 64-51,200, superior image quality and broadcast quality video in Full HD. Other Professional category winners were the Samsung NX1—the best CSC (compact systems camera or mirrorless cameras), and the Sony Alpha A7S—the best Photo/Video Camera.

The Canon EOS 7D Mark II and the Olympus OM-D E-M5 Mark II were awarded the best Expert category cameras for DSLRs and CSC respectively. The Fujifilm X100T was awarded the Best Premium Camera. Additionally, the Leica T and Lytro Illum won awards for Best Design and Best Imaging Innovation.



Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

www.betterphotography.in

GearGuide

HOW WE TEST

Product Categorisation

We first segregate products into categories for the purpose of equitability in testing. The DSLR is divided into entry-level, semi-professional and professional categories. For compacts, we distinguish between advanced and basic compact cameras. Similarly, we also test consumer and pro lenses, flashguns, printers, and other photographic accessories and gear.

The Process

We primarily test for features, performance, build, ergonomics, warranty and support. While this remains constant, the weightage we give to these parameter differs from category to category, because different types of consumers have diverse expectations from products.

Final Ratings

Under each main parameter, we list out hundreds of individual variables (for eg. colour accuracy for individual colours in different lighting, individual features, dynamic range, center-to-edge definition, light falloff, etc) against which we either give points or simply mark 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, we arrive at a score for that parameter, and then, the final score, denoted as a percentage. Additionally, based on the current pricing of a product, a star rating for 'Value for Money' is considered. Value for Money does not affect the final percentage, because prices for products change constantly.

Our Seals of Approval

Any product that scores 80% or higher in individual tests gets 'BP Recommended'—a seal of approval from our team. In comparison tests, we also tag products as 'BP Best Performer' and 'BP Best Value for Money'.

BP Excellence Awards

At the end of the calendar year, the highest rated products in each category automatically win the Better Photography Excellence Award. This is Better Photography's recognition of the very best products launched in the course of the year, and the companies that made them.



Ricoh WG-M1

A Usurper Emerges

With the **WG-M1**, Ricoh attempts to dethrone GoPro's dominance in the action camera market. Aditya Nair wonders if it will succeed.

With all the action cameras and action-adjacent cams (here's looking at you, HTC RE) introduced recently, the Ricoh WG-M1 looks like a most serious competitor to the GoPro in India. To differentiate it slightly from the rest, Ricoh is positioning it as a video-centric action camera that just happens to make pictures. I was curious to see if it would inspire the same awe that the Hero4 did.

Features

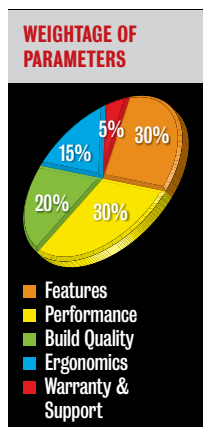
The first thing I realised when I got this camera was that I have really well-defined molars. While the camera fit snugly in my mouth, the minimum focusing distance of 0.6m meant that my images were out of focus. And thus ended my dreams of making dental selfies.

Moving to features that actually matter... the camera has a 1/2.3-inch 14MP CMOS sensor and a 16.8mm (160° field of view) f/2.8 lens for stills. With video the FOV is 137°. Since it is being branded as a video camera, I was disappointed that it topped out at 1080p30.

The camera does have Motion Blur Reduction (electronic stabilisation) in the Video mode. As a result, the WG-M1 can produce video that is smoother than the GoPro, straight out of the camera. Anyone who doesn't want to be bothered with serious video editing will welcome this.

I wish there was a Timelapse mode for photos and more control with the Burst mode, which shoots at 10fps and then takes quite a bit of time to write the files.

The camera is waterproof (up to 10m), shockproof (up to 2m), freezeproof (-10°C).



TEST

Sigma 24mm f/1.4
This is what a fantastic
wide lens looks like

32



TEST

Tamron 15–30mm
The best ultrawide
zoom available today

40



TEST

Kingston MLWG2
A five-in-one companion
for the traveller on the go

42



Being waterproof up to 10m means that the camera is good enough for novices. The GoPro housing, however, lets you go up to 40m, which is the limit for recreational diving as specified by Recreational Scuba Training Council.

Handling

I absolute love the look of this camera. It reminds me of single-person submersible vehicles. Adding to this look is the 1.5-inch LCD, on the top of the camera, which is a welcome addition in the action camera segment. Looks aside, I would have preferred to have the LCD on the back panel though, like in the GoPro Hero4 Silver. This would have been more functional.

The buttons, which sit on top of the waterproof body, are much easier to press than with the Hero4s. The camera's startup time is also much faster. Additionally, it lets you shoot while it is charging. Sadly, once switched on, the camera is in video mode by default and there is no way to change the default to Photo or Burst.

The WG-M1 uses a tripod mount and has a fairly decent lineup of accessories. The advantage is that these accessories will probably be useable with other lightweight cameras as well, if you invest in them.

Performance

Action camera quality has now reached a point where it lags behind smartphones.

While this holds true for the WG-M1, it is as good as it gets considering the competition. The GoPro tends to be conservative when it comes to selecting the ISO. Often, in low light, it will opt for ISO 400 and result in blurred images. In the same situation, the Ricoh would choose ISO 800. Additionally, the noise performance is about half a stop better than the GoPro.

In mixed lighting, the Ricoh tends to overexpose slightly, giving better colours and more detail in the shadows, while the highlights can get blown out. Conversely, the GoPro tends to underexpose and therefore the reverse is true.

There were times when the camera would overheat and switch off. It takes some time to start up again after that. We have been informed that a firmware upgrade, which will be released soon, should fix this issue and will be updating our review online once we test it.

Conclusion

For a stills only user, the WG-M1 (Rs. 29,315) is a good camera, despite missing a few key features. As a video camera or someone looking for a photo and video camera, I would still recommend the more expensive GoPro Hero4 Silver (Rs. 36,000).

If you do go for the Ricoh, you can choose between black and orange. And if I may be so bold as to give you a fashion tip, "orange is the new black."

SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Ricoh WG-M1
MOP	Rs 29,315
Effective pixels	14MP
Max. resolution	Stills 4000 x 3000px Video 3840 x 2160px
Sensor size	1/2.3-inch
Max. Aperture	f/2.8 (Fixed)
Camera Modes	Still: Single, Burst Shot (10 fps) Movie: High Speed Movie (120 FPS capture, 30 FPS playback)
Video Modes	1920x1080 at 30fps; 1280x720 at 60fps; 848x480 at 120fps
File format	JPEG, MOV
Storage types	microSD, microSDHC, microSDXC
Dimensions	66 x 43.2 x 89 mm
Weight (inc. housing)	190g

31

FINAL RATINGS

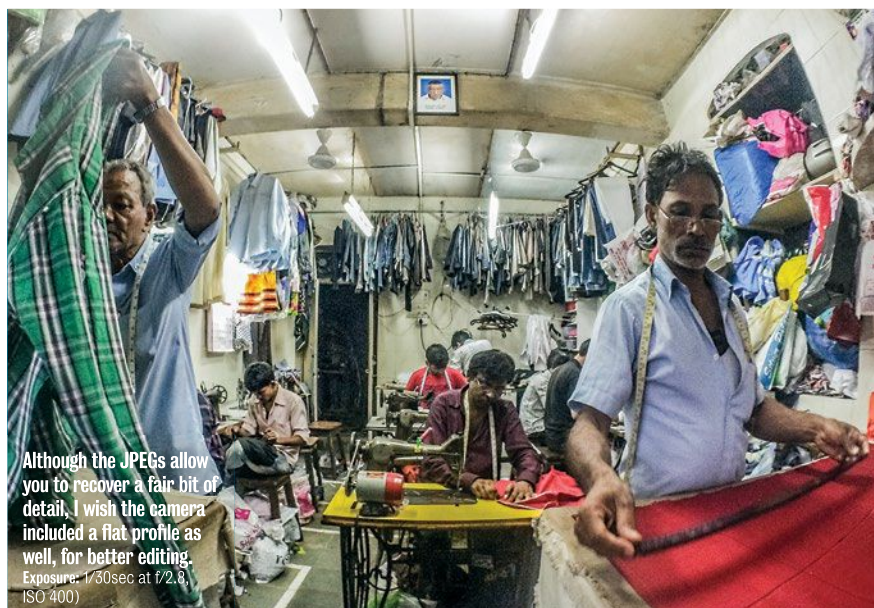
Features	25/30
Needs better video features, lacks exposure compensation, has Motion Blur Reduction	
Performance	24/30
Overheats, good image quality and ISO performance, control over WB	
Build Quality	17/20
Less than expected for an action camera, waterproof up to 10m, shockproof	
Ergonomics	12/15
Bulky but lightweight, complex menu system, buttons are easy to press	
Warranty & Support	3/5
Good service network	

OVERALL 80%

Who should buy it? Adventure enthusiasts looking for an action camera for photography.

Why? It is cheaper than the reigning king and delivers better image quality.

Value for Money ★★★★★



Although the JPEGs allow you to recover a fair bit of detail, I wish the camera included a flat profile as well, for better editing.
Exposure: 1/30sec at f/2.8, ISO 400



Sigma 24mm f/1.4 DG HSM Art

In a League of its Own

Can the Sigma 24mm f/1.4 DG HSM Art recapture the sheer magic of the previous Art lenses that preceded it? K Madhavan Pillai discovers a new favourite, even as he finds out.

32

One of the big draws of this focal length is how intimately close you can get to your subjects and still include a lot in the frame.

Exposure: 1/100sec at f/5.6, ISO 3200)

The third in the line-up in Sigma's full-frame prime Art series of lenses, my expectations from the Sigma 24mm f/1.4 DG HSM Art was extremely high. It already faced significant competition from Nikon and Canon 24mm prime offerings. If at all, Sigma's previous stellar successes was the singular biggest reason why I chose the 24mm as the only lens to accompany me into the small labour room, where my wife was having our first child. And I am very happy that I did.



Features

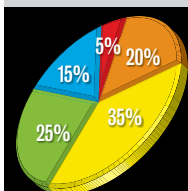
In line with Sigma's basic philosophy of simplicity, from the outside the Sigma 24mm seems to be quite nondescript. Its biggest draw is its maximum aperture of f/1.4. This opens up a wide variety of possibilities in low light and in freezing action. From the inside, the complex optical design (15 elements, most of them specialised glass to check aberrations) shows just how tough it is to design a lens at this focal length.

The minimum focusing distance of 9.8 inches, while not spectacular, is good enough. There are 9 aperture blades. The lens has a standard filter thread of 77mm, and the front of the lens does not rotate on focusing. AF is enabled by a silent HSM motor. The lens comes bundled with a petal-shaped lenshood.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Sigma 24mm f/1.4 DG HSM Art
MRP	Rs. 65,900
Lens construction	15 elements in 11 groups
Angle of view	84.1° (full-frame)
Diaphragm blades	9
Filter diameter	77mm
Dimensions, weight	70 x 52mm, 665gms

WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



Features
Performance
Build Quality
Ergonomics
Warranty & Support

PLUS

- Sharpness
- Good construction
- Excellent handling
- Price

MINUS

- Edge definition at f/1.4



Both the sharpness at the centre, and the soft-edged foreground and background focus blurs at $f/1.4$ are nothing short of stunning.
Exposure: 1/50sec at $f/2.8$ (ISO 100)

All photographs by K Madhavan Pillai

Handling

With lenses of this nature, how well it handles is linked to how much you can achieve with it. Amongst its competitors, the Sigma 24mm is the heaviest, but the overall shape and feel ensures that it both fits into the hand and balances extremely well, to the point where one hardly notices the weight at all. The overall build of the lens inspires confidence.

While a wide aperture ensures that you almost never have to move into a situation where MF is required, one of the highlight of the Art series design is the wide, rubber ribbed focus ring that falls exactly at the right position at the fingers. The ring has the right resistance to allow precise movements, and there is full-time MF override.

Performance

Critical analyses of images show exactly where the challenges lie in the design of a 24mm, as opposed to the 35mm and 50mm in the Art series. The level of sharpness that the Sigma 24mm can produce at $f/1.4$ at the center of the frame is simply fantastic. The edges have a marked drop in resolution and I must say I was slightly disappointed to see that. With a 24mm lens, the main

subjects are seldom right at the center of the frame. That said, overall sharpness still compares favourably to competing lenses. There is also visibly apparent but easily corrected vignetting $f/1.4$. At $f/5.6$, the lens peaks in terms of overall optical quality, and brilliantly so. Negligible fringing is present at the edges wide open, but complete disappears on stopping down. Distortion is well controlled.

As with the previous lenses in this series, the AF locks quickly and conclusively. A note about the AF with reference to sharpness—when a lens gets so beautifully sharp, ensuring that the AF locks at the right point is very critical. A lot of my missed opportunities were, in fact, photographs in which I was not very careful with where the camera locked focus.

Conclusion

Priced at Rs. 65,900, the Sigma 24mm $f/1.4$ DG HSM Art is a little more than half the price of the Canon EF24mm $f/1.4$ II USM, and almost a third of that of the AF-S Nikkor 24mm $f/1.4$ G ED. At its least, it equals their performance and at its best, it sets the standard. Can there possibly be any question about its value? Enough said. **BP**

FINAL RATINGS

Features	17/20
Maximum aperture of $f/1.4$, HSM motor, many special glass elements	
Performance	32/35
Excellent sharpness, some loss at edges	
Build Quality	23/25
Metal barrel with high grade plastics	
Ergonomics	14/15
Broad, well-positioned MF ring, Full-time MF	
Warranty & Support	3/5
Wide area service network, two year warranty	

OVERALL 89%

Who should buy it? Perfectly suited for street, interior and action photography. Practically anyone looking to buy a large aperture 24mm prime lens.

Why? Exemplary optical quality, excellent handling and a great price are an unbeatable combination.

Value for Money ★★★★★☆



Tamron SP 15–30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD

An Unbeatable Proposition

The Tamron SP 15–30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD is a serious contender to the coveted title of the Best Ultrawide Zoom available. K Madhavan Pillai finds out if it has what it takes.

40

The perfect ultrawide has been a serious pursuit for the past two decades. The newly released Tamron SP 15–30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD is up against stiff competition from Nikon, Canon and Tokina, all of whom have a f/2.8 full-frame lens, and from Sigma as well, for lenses with f/4 or lower. While it is debatable how small differences in the focal ranges affect usage, the real questions are about optical quality, construction, handling and features.

Features

Setting Tamron's 15–30mm apart is the inclusion of Vibration Control (IS), which is a first with lenses in this range. The advantage

provided by the fixed maximum aperture of f/2.8 over lenses with smaller apertures also cannot be overstated. It opens up plenty of possibilities for advanced users.

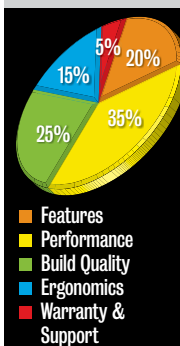
The 15–30mm has a rather complex optical design (18 elements in 13 groups), with several highly specialised glass elements and nano-coatings to check chromatic and optical aberrations (including flare)... common problems that plague ultrawide zooms. A silent ultrasonic drive powers AF. There is full-time MF override. The large, bulging front lens element precludes a fixed hood without a filter thread, so no filters can be attached. To prevent damage to the front lens element, an antifouling coating repels water or oils from sticking to its surface, allowing easy cleaning. A unique double hood system adds strength to the outer fixed hood and aids weathersealing. The lens also has a rubber grommet ring on the mount.

At 30mm, with relatively flat scenes, one can barely differentiate between this and normal focal lengths. Distortion is barely visible.

Exposure: 1/50sec at f/8, ISO 400)



WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Tamron SP 15-30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD
MRP	Rs. 79,900
Lens construction	18 elements in 13 groups
Angle of view	110°–71°(full-frame)
Diaphragm blades	9 (circular)
Filter diameter	No filters can be attached
Dimensions, Weight	145 x 98.4mm, 1100 grams

PLUS

- Overall optical brilliance
- Superb build
- Price

MINUS

- Interchanged MF / Zoom ring position
- MF ring too tight



All photographs by K Madhavan Pillai

Handling

The Tamron is a superbly well-built lens and the heaviest amongst its competitors. It balances well with full-frame DSLRs, but feels large and front heavy with APS-C DSLRs. Initially, I found myself fumbling with this lens because it has the zoom ring in front of the focus ring, unlike pro lenses from either Nikon or Canon. Nikon users will also have to get used to the focus ring rotating in the opposite direction, similar to Canon lenses.


What takes a lot more getting used to is the effort required to rotate the zoom ring, owing to all those glass elements and overzealous weathersealing, which, on its own, is always a good thing. While several senior photographers, to whom I had offered this lens to try, did not seem to mind, I found myself over-correcting from the desired focal length frequently, missing more than a few shots, until I started using it with a consciously firm hand.

Performance

Optically, the Tamron challenges the best, in this case, the Nikon 14–24mm f/2.8G, and on some parameters, even exceeds it. It is fantastically sharp across the focal range. At f/2.8, there is a slight drop at the edges, but the centre is exemplary. Stopping down

to f/4 seems to bring out the very best in the lens. Beyond that, there is no visually perceivable difference, except for slight, easily correctable vignetting. Control over flare is superb. Distortion is very slight, but visible. AF is quick, mostly silent, and as fast as competing lenses. Apart from very few exceptional wide angle primes (one of them tested in this issue), I have not experienced other lenses in the ultrawide zoom segment with this level of optical performance.

Conclusion

At Rs. 79,900, the Tamron is significantly less expensive than either the Nikkor AF-S 14–24MM f/2.8G ED or the Canon EF 16–35mm f/2.8L II USM. The Tokina AT-X 16–28mm f/2.8 Pro FX is the least expensive, but does not have a quick or silent AF, or its level of optical performance. Neither of the three competitors are equipped with stabilisation. Canon users may want to consider the newly launched EF 11–24mm f/4 USM L, which promises to offer the Tamron a challenge, at least optically, if not on other fronts, including maximum aperture and stabilisation. Otherwise, if you are willing to reconcile with the handling quirks, the Tamron 15–30mm is simply the best ultra wide zoom available today for full-frame DSLRs. 

➔ **Depth-of-field can be quite magical at 20mm. The control that the lens allows over flare at different points in the frame is exemplary.**
Exposure: 1/250sec at f/8 (ISO 6400)

FINAL RATINGS

Features f/2.8, Vibration Control, full-time MF override, silent USD AF motor	19/20
Performance Overall optical brilliance, quick AF	33/35
Build Quality Extremely sturdy, moisture sealing	23/25
Ergonomics Interchanged zoom and focus rings, overly resistant rotation on the zoom ring	10/15
Warranty & Support Wide service network, two year warranty in India	3/5

OVERALL 88%

Who should buy it? Advanced users involved in interior, architecture, wedding, street or action photography.

Why? With exceptionally good optical characteristics, the expanded possibilities with this stabilised lens necessitates practice and relatively good knowledge of technique.

Value for Money ★★★★★☆



Kingston MobileLite Wireless G2

Attempting to Do it All

Is the Kingston MobileLite Wireless G2 a wireless transfer device? Is it a router? Is it a portable charger? Aditya Nair finds out everything that the device is capable of.

42

Well, it isn't a plane. And now that I have that Superman reference out of my system, let's talk about Kingston's MobileLite Wireless devices. The original MobileLite was created to be a means for WiFi data transfer. Cutting through the rhetoric, it was a card reader that didn't use a cable.

This was quite useful if you wanted to back up images from a WiFi-enabled camera or smartphone. Alternatively, you could store your portfolio on to a card and then connect it to your phone or tablet to show potential clients, without using up space.

Going Beyond

The second generation of this product, the G2, builds on this by adding other useful features. An Ethernet port lets you use it as a router, instead of having to connect to one. This is one feature that frequent travellers will love. Often, most hotels provide two kinds of internet solutions—weak WiFi signals and Ethernet cables to the room. With the G2, you can set up your own hotspot and finally stop worrying about your inability to access Instagram.

It comes with a 4640mAh battery that can be used to charge your phone or tablet, or if you are a Sony user, even your camera.

Then There is the App

Like its predecessor, you can add a USB stick and use the G2 as a portable storage device as well. Using the mobile app (available on iOS, Android and Kindle), you can connect a phone, tablet or WiFi-enabled camera and transfer images and videos to-and-from the device.

Why Pick One Up?

It's a matter of simple economics and convenience. A decent router will cost you about Rs. 1500, a portable charger will cost about Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000, and a fast SD card reader will cost you another Rs. 500. The MobileLite G2 will give you all of these features at a marginally higher price. Although the official MRP is Rs. 5500, the device is available for between Rs. 3500 and Rs. 4500 on e-commerce portals.

Batman has his utility belt and the MobileLite Wireless G2 could function as one for every internet-loving traveller. So, is there any kryptonite in this belt?

The only features that would have been welcome are a CF card reader and internal storage. Although the internal storage, like the way the WD My Passport drives function, would severely push up the price of the device. So, that could be included in a higher end version of the device. ☑

SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Kingston MobileLite Wireless G2
MRP	Rs. 5500
File Format	MP3, WAV, m4V, mp4 (H.264), JPG, TIF, PDF
Dimensions (L X W X H)	129.14mm x 79.09mm x 19.28mm
Weight	171g
External Storage Inputs	SD or microSD cards and USB flash drives

FINAL RATINGS

Features Can be used like a router, portable charger, and wireless card reader all rolled into one	28/30
Performance Works fast, doesn't have any bugs	28/30
Build Quality Plastic, but doesn't feel flimsy	12/15
Handling Compact, sleekly designed	18/20
Warranty & Support Two year warranty and support	3/5

OVERALL 89%

Value for Money ★★★★★☆

Cecilia Gallery Alpaca Wool Leather Camera Neck Straps

Beautiful & Uncompromising

These straps are truly nothing less than luxury at its best, as K Madhavan Pillai discovers.

This neck strap is unlike any other. Stitched carefully over the broad leather neckpiece, is a swathe of alpaca wool, handwoven by the Andean weavers from the Peruvian highlands. The full-grain Argentinian cowhide leather is supple and treated to withstand sweat and grime. Unlike faux leather, it does not get slippery on a hot day, but it should be cleaned and dried well at the end of the day. The leather provides excellent support. Yet, for heavy cameras, broad neoprene straps offer a higher level of comfort.

Weight is not a problem for the Cecilia though. Invisible from the outside, a nylon core, rated for a tensile strength of over 100 kilos, runs through the entire length of the strap without adding to the thickness. The leather strap and tab ends, with the zinc-alloy fittings, are more comfortable, neater and flatter than the plastic fitted nylon ends of the rubberised straps that come with cameras today.

The strap is finely crafted, well-designed, tough, and stylish. The black leather looks good with DSLRs. Visually, the brown strap somehow seems to pair perfectly with mirrorless or retro-styled cameras, especially with a leather case.

When you think you can reconcile yourself to some self-flattery, the Cecilia Gallery Neck Strap is a perfect buy. It also makes a fantastic gift for a discerning photographer. Ordered online, the price of USD 104 (approximately Rs. 6500, exclusive of shipping) is indeed a fair price to pay for this bit of 'utilitarian art', with this level of attention to detail.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Product Name: Cecilia Gallery Alpaca Wool Leather Camera Neck Straps
- Peruvian alpaca wool
- Argentinian cowhide
- Nylon webbing core
- Zinc-alloy fittings
- Adjustable length: 26–52 inches
- Neck length, width: 20 x 1.5 inches



Cecilia Gallery Q'enqo Alpaca wool black leather & Challaqpu Alpaca wool brown leather camera straps

Product source:

Cecilia Gallery,
New York
www.ceciliagallery.com,
info@ceciliagallery.com
Tel: +1 646 8205046

RATING



Sirui N-3004X Aluminum Tripod

Two-In-One Excellence

Supriya Joshi uncovers the practical uses of the multipurpose tripod, the Sirui N-3004X.

The Sirui N-3004X is a compact tripod, but it offers a lot for its size. To begin with, the tripod weighs 2.3kg, but it can take up a load of up to 18kg, including whichever head you choose to fit on it. The best part about the tripod, however, is that it also converts into a monopod. One of the legs is detachable, which transforms into a monopod when you unscrew it from the chassis and attach the mounting plate to it. That's a two-in-one deal right there.

The manufacturer certainly had ergonomics in mind when they designed this tripod, as they have given comfort and easy portability precedence. One of the examples in this is that the legs fold up against the tripod rather than what is seen in conventional tripods, which is a great space saver.

If you are a lover of close-up photography, the N-3004X can also come down to the height of 6.1 inches. Plus, the centre column is reversible, so you can get really close to the subject. Another feature of the tripod is that it has stainless steel spikes on the base of the legs, which are greatly useful when shooting on surfaces like gravel and grassy terrain.

The tripod is priced at Rs. 28,600 and is a great value for photographers looking for a tripod with multiple uses.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Product Name: Sirui N-3004X Aluminum Tripod
- MRP: Rs. 28,600
- Load Capacity: 18kg
- Max Height: 176cm
- Min Height: 15cm
- Weight: 2.3kg
- Leg Sections: 4

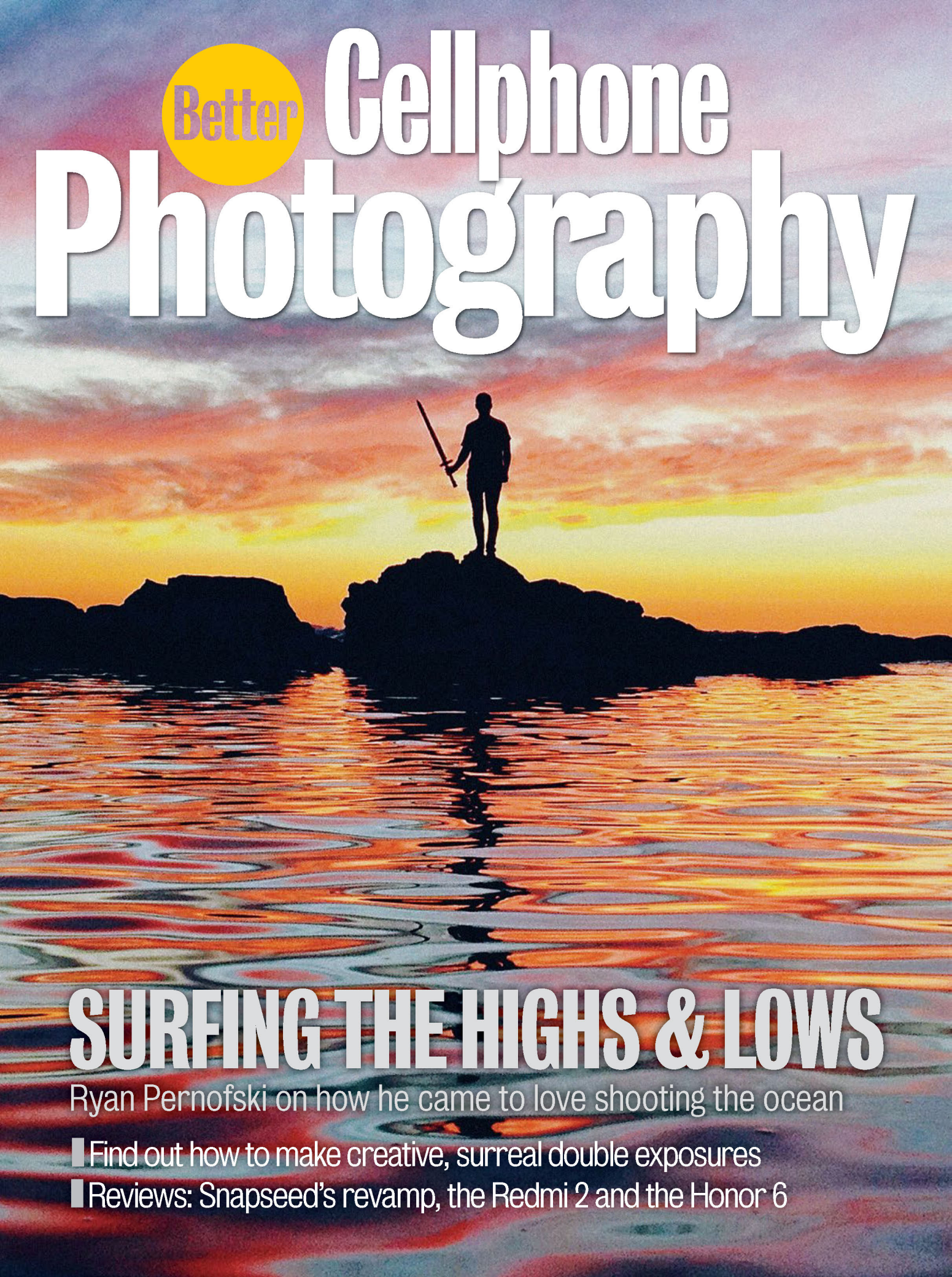


Product source:

Foto Centre Trading
Private Limited,
Tel: +91 22 22700909
/22701010

RATING



A person stands on a dark rock in the middle of the ocean at sunset. The person is silhouetted against a vibrant sky of orange, yellow, and pink. They are holding a surfboard vertically. The water in the foreground is dark with concentric ripples reflecting the sunset colors.

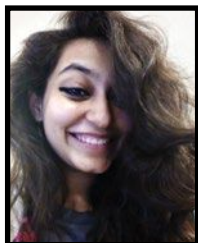
Better Cellphone Photography

SURFING THE HIGHS & LOWS

Ryan Pernofski on how he came to love shooting the ocean

- Find out how to make creative, surreal double exposures
- Reviews: Snapseed's revamp, the Redmi 2 and the Honor 6

“We’re not being selective enough about the kind of photos we choose to share. I fear that when historians look back at this epoch, all they will see is memes and badly shot cupcakes.”



With Great Simplicity Comes Great Responsibility

Paeans have been sung about the ease with which cellphones allow one to shoot, and also on their unobtrusiveness. But the real simplicity of cellphones, I believe, lies in the whole package. I’m not just talking about the weight, or the stripped down settings, but the whole gamut—right from shooting, selecting the right image, postprocessing, and sharing, along with the various platforms themselves. For me, this ease of use just means one thing—more photography than I would do with a DSLR and a place to create a virtual contact sheet. But for many of us, it can mean many things, it can mean the ability to share every single moment (regardless of whether it merits that kind of exposure), it can mean virtual tours of places we’ve never seen, or the ability to see what our favourite author, musician, or designer is doing with their personal or professional life. For many of us, cellphone photography is all about access. This kind of unprecedented access and visual recording of our collective history is something that excites me and annoys me in equal parts. It annoys me because we’re not being selective enough about what we choose to share, we’re not editing our sharing of information enough, and I don’t mean censorship, I mean being critical of every photo we post, be it the coffee or tea we had for breakfast, or a funny street shot. I fear that when historians look back at this epoch, all they will see is memes and badly shot cupcakes and coffee.

Ambarin Afsar

ambarin.afsar@betterphotography.in / Instagram: @batsaboutcats



Untitled by Masoud Gharai

Our upcoming issue will feature the works of this unique street photographer from Iran

Find out how you can blend your photographs into double exposures using a variety of creative techniques
Turn to page 54

Amit Mehra speaks about how cellphones have become tools in the ritual of visual empowerment
Turn to page 57

Cover photograph by
Ryan Pernofski

“

I like to make people a little uncomfortable. It encourages them to examine who they are and why they think the way they do.

”

SALLY MANN

Sally Mann is one of America’s most renowned photographers. Her most seminal works include *Second Sight*, *At Twelve*, *Immediate Family*, *Still Time* and *What Remains*. Her portraits of her young children incited plenty of controversy and continue to be the most daring and intimate looks at a private world.



Honor 6 Plus

Almost Honourable

The latest flagship from Huawei makes some pretty lofty claims about the **Honor 6 Plus**' camera. **Natasha Desai** investigates.

48

⚠ Although the camera does a good job in low light, there is a fair amount of noise reduction taking place.

From Huawei's 'smartphone e-brand' Honor comes the 6 Plus. The predecessor, the Honor 6 featured a 13MP rear camera.

The 6 Plus comes with a dual camera setup of 8MP each, which saves a maximum of 13MP resolution images.

The phone offers the ability to refocus after shooting, much like the HTC One, Xiaomi Mi4 phones and Lytro cameras.

What it Comes With

The phone features 32GB of storage, expandable to 128GB, which is quite cool.



The phone's battery life is very good. It lasted the entire day in spite of continuous heavy shooting and app multi-tasking.




All photographs by Natasha Desai

The phone's Panorama mode is available for the front camera as well. With the Super Night mode, you can shoot 10sec long exposures, with decent results, if you can keep your phone steady using a tripod grip or by keeping it on a surface.

Not So Bad After All

What I was not too kicked about was the phone's shutter lag, that made me miss quite a few interesting moments. It does,

however, shoot decent HDR images and the video quality is pretty good too. The 8MP front camera gives you a zoomed-in preview of your expression, so no bad selfies, ever! Another cool feature is the Ultrasnapshot, which shoots whatever is in front of the camera with a double press of the volume button, when the screen is locked.

Overall, the Honor 6 Plus is really great as a phone and not bad at all as a shooter. But, at Rs. 26,499 and the promise of 'DSLR quality images', I would expect RAW shooting capability, and no shutter lag. In this price range, you will also find the Xiaomi Mi 4 with 4k capability but with average low light performance. 

➔ The screen showed me images with punchy colours, but when viewed on the computer, they turned out quite flat.

49



Twice the Camera

After you shoot the image, the Honor 6 Plus offers the ability to change its focus point. However, this supposed change in depth of field, looks more like something an app would do and I was not too happy with the results. It looked a lot like the Lens Blur option that Google Camera offers.

That said, the dual lens system delivers on image quality. What I really liked was its low light performance. There was really good flare and noise control with not much loss of detail. Unsurprisingly, it isn't the 'DSLR quality' that the company claims.

AT A GLANCE

SPECIFICATIONS	Dual parallel 8MP rear camera, 32GB inbuilt memory expandable to 128GB, 1.3GHz octa-core Huawei Kirin 925 processor, 3GB RAM, Rs. 19,999
WHAT WE LIKE	Overall performance, battery life, low light performance
WHAT WE DISLIKE	Shutter lag, not-so-great refocusing ability
WHY BUY IT?	It is pretty good as an Android phone, it offers more than enough storage space and a great camera

FINAL RATINGS

87%

CAMERA FEATURES	Object tracking, refocus mode after shooting	22/25
IMAGE QUALITY	Good image quality, good results in low light	26/30
VIDEO QUALITY	Pretty good video at 1080p at 30fps	13/15
HANDLING	Ergonomically clumsy to hold, but sturdy enough	13/15
SPEED & RESPONSIVENESS	Phone is quick, but camera shutter lag exists	13/15



Xiaomi Redmi 2

Colour Mi Red

Redmi's back, tell a friend. **Supriya Joshi** revisits the newer version of an old friend, the **Xiaomi Redmi 2**.

Budget phones make me happy, and none had made me happier than the Redmi 1S. So much so that after I reviewed the phone, I went out and bought it for myself. Its latest iteration has now arrived, presenting an all new challenge to fellow budget phones.

What's New?

To answer the above question, not a whole lot. The Redmi 2 features an 8MP Omnivision sensor against the BSI sensor that was found in the 1S. Redmi 2 still has an 8MP rear camera, however, which is

disappointing. The image quality remains class-leading, but so was the case with the 1S. The company has upgraded the front camera, which is now 2MP from the 1.6MP one in Redmi 1S. The camera features are exactly the same as the one in the Mi 4, like exposure control, a Manual Mode and 1080p video. The phone runs on a 2200mAh battery, and I did not face the overheating problem I did while testing the Redmi 1S.

Day and Night

In daylight, the images are captured very well, with good colour reproduction and a decent amount of detail. The images shot in low light are disappointing and they turn out slightly fuzzy and dull. This was unexpected as I had faced no such issue with the low light quality of the 1S.

Value for Money

The Redmi 2 is priced at Rs. 6999, a mere Rs. 1000 more than what the Redmi 1S was priced. Even though it seems like a refreshed version of the previous model, it is still undoubtedly one of the best phones you can buy at this price. **BP**

FUN APPS TO TRY

Hyperlapse may not have arrived on Android yet, but there's another great timelapse app you can try in the meanwhile. Titled Lapse It, the app allows you to make timelapses with ease. There are many filter effects you can add after shooting as well. The app is priced at Rs. 159.99

50

⬇️ **The Redmi 2 is quick and very responsive, with minimal shutter lag.**
Exposure: 1/20sec at f/2.2 (ISO 100)



All Photographs by Supriya Joshi

AT A GLANCE

SPECIFICATIONS	8MP, Android 4.4 KitKat, 4.7-inch display, 1.2GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon processor, 1GB RAM, 8GB storage (expandable up to 32GB), Rs. 6999.
WHAT WE LIKE	Good image quality, LTE support and highly affordable.
WHAT WE DISLIKE	Low light image quality, image sensor the same as previous version
WHY BUY IT?	The Redmi 2 is still one of the best cameraphones of its price range. Plus, it is readily available online, instead of periodic sales.

FINAL RATINGS

84%

CAMERA FEATURES	Manual mode, 8MP, 2MP front camera	12/15
IMAGE QUALITY	Good quality images in bright light, poor low light performance	29/35
VIDEO QUALITY	Full HD 1080p video	17/20
HANDLING	Comfortable to hold	12/15
SPEED & RESPONSIVENESS	Quite responsive with no shutter lag	14/15

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Snapseed 2.0

Snap, Snap Away

Snapseed got a massive, much-wanted update but not everyone was thrilled. Aditya Nair figures out why.

Snapseed began as a desktop editing software from Nik Software, until a Google buyout. What followed included the desktop software being ditched and most of the features moved online for Google+ users. What remained was the very powerful but dormant iOS and Android apps. It has been two years since and the long-awaited update is finally here.

An Extreme Makeover

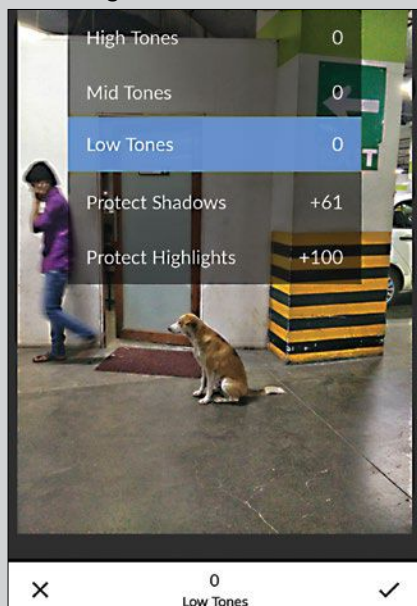
When it comes to Snapseed, there are two kinds of photographers. The former, who

recognised the potential of the app and harnessed it for creative purposes. The latter were turned off by its cluttered design. Unfortunately, I fall in the second category. Fortunately, the update is to entice my kind. Sadly, it comes at the expense of the already existing loyal fan base who aren't happy about having to get used to an entirely new layout. There is also a third kind of Snapseed user, the ones lamenting the shutdown of the desktop app. For the moment, at least, there is no hope for them.

With the new design, the photograph occupies the maximum possible screen

52

The Exciting New Feature Set



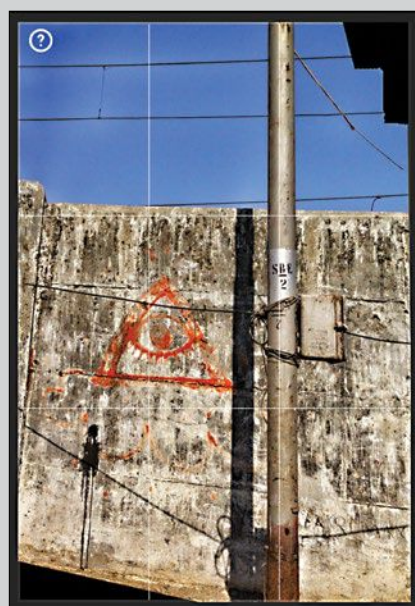
Boosting Tonal Contrast

In addition to the regular image tuning functions, the app gives you control over the tonal range. This added control for recovery and boosting the highlight, shadows and midtones was quite useful.



Adding Drama and Intrigue

While Snapseed's filter list is neither as vast as VSCO or as popular as Instagram, I am a big fan of the filters offered under Noir and Drama. Alternately, you can try Rotolux, if you are reminiscing about the hippie era.



Transform and Content Aware Fill

The new Transform tool lets you do perspective corrections. Normally, this would result in black patches that need to be cropped out. Here, the app fills in the empty space. It is quite accurate for simple edges too.

All photographs by Aditya Nair

Two years in the making, this app update is well worth the wait.

space. A simple plus sign lets you access all of the editing features. Fortunately, the organisation of editing tools remains similar to the older version. You can also bring up a histogram by tapping on the three bars at the bottom left.

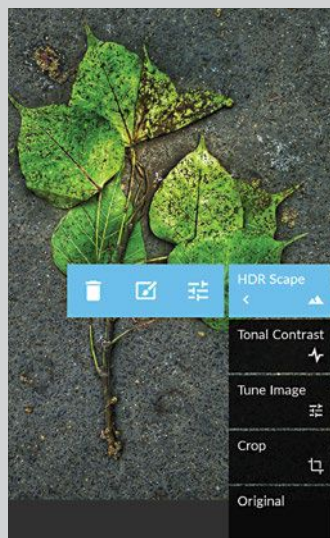
Working Magic

When it comes to smartphone, Snapseed has been one of the most popular editing tools along with Instagram and VSCO. However, Snapseed has always been a more potent editing tool than the two and now is even more so.

Like Instagram it uses a slider that ranges from -100 to 100 (or 0 to 100 depending on the feature) that gives you far more nuanced control than VSCO. I found it to be much better at recovering details and colours as well. The Auto function, however, is not recommended. Here, I would say Instagram's Lux does a much better job.

Although Snapseed's filter set is neither as popular or versatile as VSCO and Instagram, they do a fairly good job at making images.

The Lens Blur filter, an update to the earlier Blur filter, has a more natural look. While it isn't a perfect replacement for shallow DOF, it is fun to experiment with.



Of History and Layers

Snapseed's approach to non destructive and layer-based editing is quite unique. They have done so by adding this functionality to the History tool. Therefore, you can now go back to any previous edit and change it quite easily. Snapseed refers to this as Stacks.

However, more complex editing that requires the use of blending modes and layer masks won't be possible.

You can also copy Stacks from one image and add them to another image to save time while editing. Thus, giving you the ability to create custom Presets. Additionally, with the Masking Brush you can go back to a Stack and apply its settings selectively.

What's Missing?

Snapseed is a RAW-capable editing app but it doesn't let you edit RAW files. Confused? Here's what I mean. The iOS tablet app lets you edit RAW files as long as you transfer them through your computer. Yet, on my RAW-capable OnePlus One, I cannot access the DNG files. The option to import them has been disabled. Since most editing software today can't handle RAW files, this would have been a huge advantage. There is also a resolution issue. When using smartphones or tablets the final output is limited to 8MP and 16MP respectively.

The Grunge filter has been removed, much to the dismay of fans. A few users, using older smartphones, have pointed out that the app now crashes, which wasn't an issue earlier. However, this wasn't a problem I faced and we can probably leave it to pending bug fixes.

Go Ahead, Get It!

Snapseed has always been one of the best editing tools around and has just gotten easier to use. Most of what is missing from the app cannot be found with competitors either. Plus, it's free.

AT A GLANCE

SPECIFICATIONS	iOS 8.0 or later; Android 4.1 or higher
WHAT WE LIKE	Minimal design, new filters
WHAT WE DISLIKE	Lacks RAW editing, output resolution limit, lacks the old Grunge filter
WHY BUY IT?	Easy to use, exceptionally good editing features

FINAL RATINGS

93%

FEATURES	Layer editing, content-aware transform tool, new filters	24/25
PERFORMANCE	Saves high quality images, significant fixes get processed quickly	28/30
EASE OF USE	Simple interface, quick access to features, lots of options	33/35
SPEED & RESPONSIVENESS	Fast, doesn't lag or crash	9/10

Aylin Angun

Self-portraits are one of the best subjects for experimentation. This image was made using a self-timer and was blended with the Multi Expo app, and then processed with the Magic Hour app. Shot with: Apple iPhone 4

The Artful Overlay

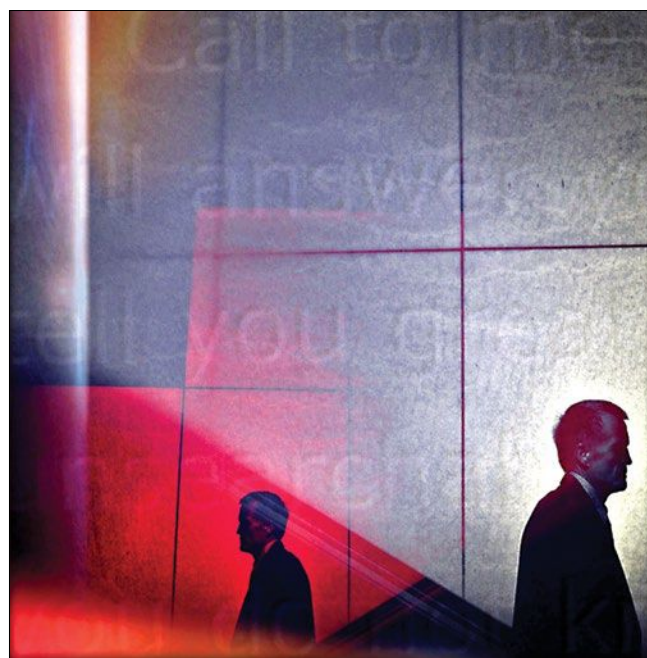
Take the classic double exposure to a whole new level of cool, with a snap of your fingers. **Natasha Desai** shows you a few creative things you can do to mix your photographs and let your imagination take flight.



Gopal M S

➤ You can make a faux double exposure by using a reflective surface like glass, creatively.
Shot with: HTC One X

When film photography was still the norm, a double exposure meant that the film was exposed twice. With cellphones, you can use slow shutterspeeds/long exposures, found under the Night mode, to do the same. Alternatively, you can use apps like Slow Shutter Cam and Light Bomber.



David Ingham

Focus on your subject when you begin the exposure, then cover the camera, aim it at something else and uncover. Remember, you will need to be quick!

A Fantastic Base

The first crucial element is a good base image like a portrait or a relatively textureless surface. The next thing to do, ▶

➤ This is a perfect example of how you can use a bunch of different elements from the source images and textures.
Shot with: Apple iPhone 4s

55

Instead of blending two images, you could try cutting out blocks and sections of photos and overlaying them on your base.

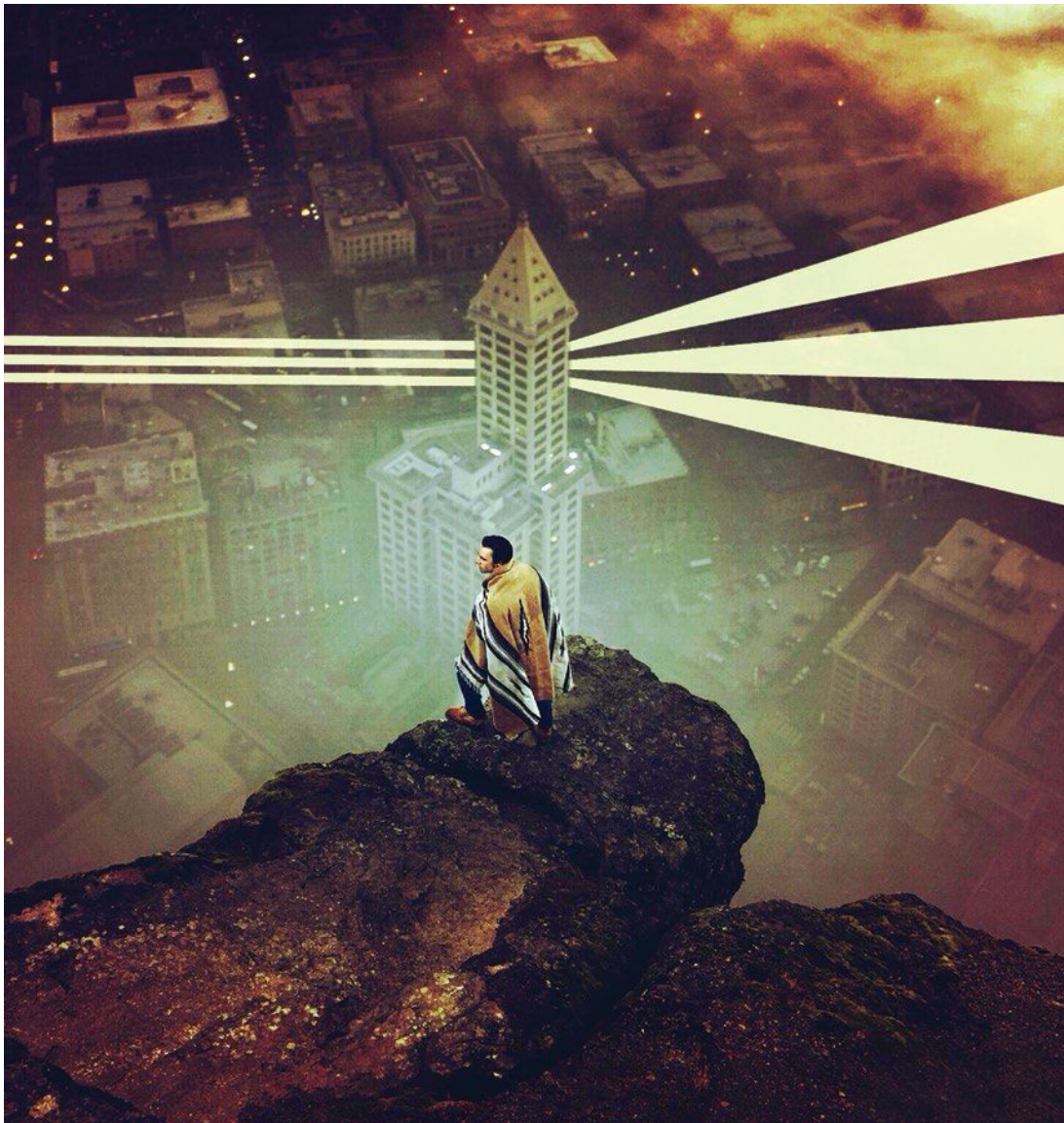


Natasha Desai

FUN TRICKS TO TRY

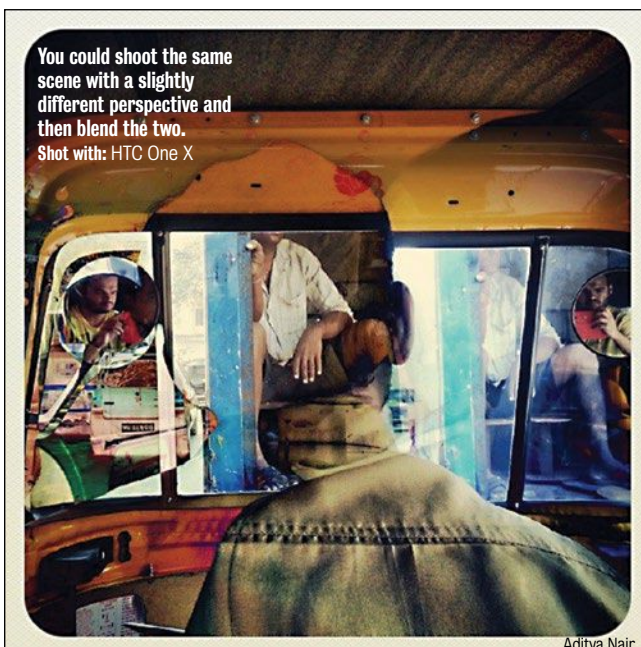
Apps like Decim8 and Glitche totally deconstruct and turn your images into trippy works of art. Step outside your comfort zone, run your precious photographs through these apps and enjoy the result!

➤ You can find a way of using the blown out parts of the image as negative space. This will give the portrait breathing space. This photograph was processed with the Diana app.
Shot with: Apple iPhone 5



G You can add yet another element to your blended image with an app like Lorystripes. This image was blended using UnionApp and filtered through Mextures.

Edited by Priyank Gajera. Original images sourced from www.unsplash.com



You could shoot the same scene with a slightly different perspective and then blend the two.
Shot with: HTC One X

Aditya Nair

is find an interesting image that you can blend with the first one, using apps like Blender, Superimpose or Layrs. You could use silhouettes of people or textures like leaves, peeling paint or anything that looks graphical.

Blend to Make It or Break It

Most image blending apps offer several options that can lighten the overlaid image, darken it, or turn it into something completely bizarre. Play with the sliders to find the look you like best. You could even blend the same two images more than once for added effect.

When creating double exposures, the world is your oyster, quite literally. Almost anything you photograph can be part of a good double exposure. All you have to do is keep shooting and experimenting! 📷

So Many Apps

There are a ton of options available for both Android and iOS. Some of the recommended ones are Superimpose, Blender, Layrs, Diana, Union App, BlendCam and Multi Expo. Some have more features than the others, but it's all a matter of preference.



Amit Mehra

The Ritual of Visual Empowerment



Amit Mehra

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While attending a recent wedding in the family, I couldn't help observing the far reaching effect of cellphones in our daily lives. Almost everyone photographs each other, and the spontaneous photoshoot/group shot/selfie has become an integral part of the modern-day social gathering. When earlier, one may have posed for the designated photographer, the cameraphone has allowed everyone, photographer or not, to engage with the process. This kind of picturemaking is not just about the destination, not just about that final photo uploaded on one's Facebook timeline, but also about the process. Cellphone photography has become an icebreaker, a

conversation and a ritual, one that is enjoyed by one and all—the joy of collecting everyone, shooting their picture, and then, immediately, striking a pose so that they can, in turn, photograph you.

Of course, the modern-day family album is largely virtual. That is something that we need to acknowledge, and it is also true that Facebook, Instagram and mobile connectivity are the real reasons why everyone uses their cellphone so often. It's not just a camera, not just a handy tool, but a voice that allows both photographers and non-photographers to interact with the visual world. This is visual empowerment, come to think of it, and what we make of it in the future, will be extremely interesting. **BP**

Constantly balancing the worlds of commercial and documentary photography, Amit describes himself saying, "I'm like an octopus who likes to deal with different things at the same time. You can call me a schizophrenic photographer." The moments in this monthly diary are excerpts from his ongoing work titled 'Roznaama'.



Ryan Pernofski

- He is a 24-year-old photographer who also runs a graphic design business.
- He does not enjoy reading too much, but he has read *The Lord of the Rings* series by J R R Tolkien, which ranks amongst his all-time favourite epics.
- Ryan provides tidbits of photography related information, his life and behind-the-scene shots from his shoots through his Snapchat stories (@ryanpernofski).

Surf's Up!

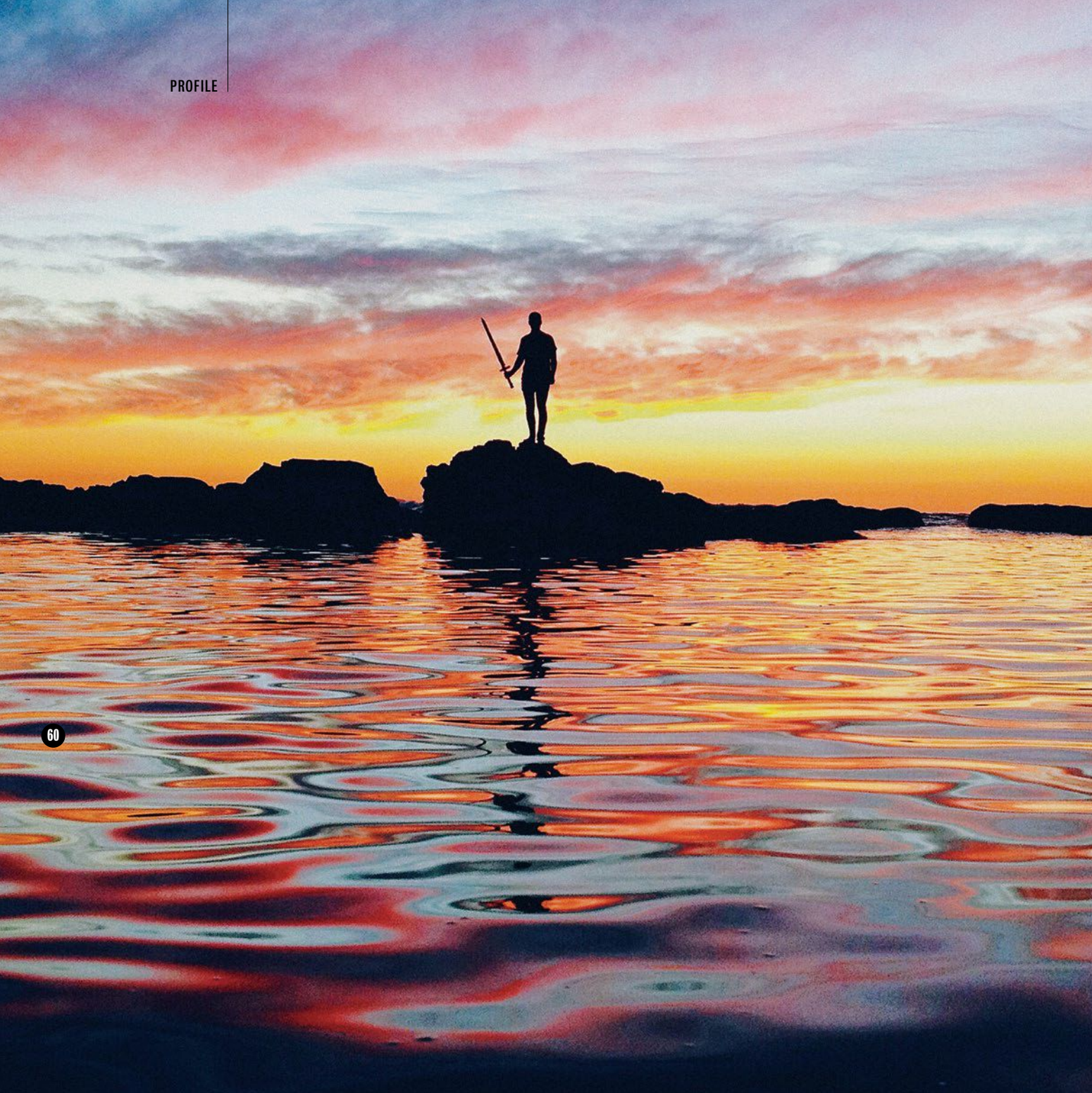
Amidst surf, sand and sunshine, **Ryan Pernofski** talks to **Natasha Desai** about staying inspired photographically and the thrill of shooting the ebb, flow, swells and crests of the ocean.

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FIND RYAN HERE!

- Website:
www.ryanpernofski.com
- Instagram:
[@ryanpernofski](https://www.instagram.com/ryanpernofski)
- Facebook:
www.facebook.com/ryanpernofski
- Vine:
[@ryanpernofski](https://vine.co/v/ryanpernofski)
- Twitter:
[@ryanpernofski](https://twitter.com/ryanpernofski)

Ryan concentrates on placing himself in a good position in relation to the wave, rather than looking at his cellphone screen. He only glances at the phone to make sure there is no water on the lens and that it has focused.



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Some of Ryan's images are reminiscent of his love for fantasies like *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*.

The town of Ulladulla and its surroundings located on the south coast of Australia, boasts of golden sands, beautiful skies, amazing waves and residents who love to surf. For a kid who had just moved from a non-beach city of Brisbane to Ulladulla, however, it was perhaps not the best experience. "I was easily the worst swimmer in my class, and so surfing/swimming wasn't something that came naturally to me. But, there wasn't much else to do, so I just made myself

learn. It was so much fun that I instantly fell in love with the water and have been doing it ever since!"

Waves on His Phone

Finding his spark of interest in surfing is what led Ryan to discover *Movement*, a magazine targetted at the young surfer, and subsequently, photography. "I would look at the photographs and think to myself, 'I would love to shoot like that someday!'" Rather than pick up a camera to shoot his stunning surroundings, Ryan

INSTAFOLLOW NOW

Photographer Cameron Bloom's young son rescued a magpie and the whole family fell in love with her. You can follow their fun and love-filled life with the moody little bird christened Penguin Bloom on @penguinthemagpie

Tips on Becoming a Better Photographer

- **Find Your Niche:** There are a lot of things you can shoot with your cellphone. Play on your strengths and keep at it, until you get better.
- **Be Curious:** Immerse yourself in good imagery and even better conversations, as this is how you will obtain most of your learning.
- **Keep it Simple:** There are a ton of accessories you can add to your phone, but these can just be distracting. Use the bare bones of what you need and stick to it.

began photographing with his iPhone in 2010, the year that Instagram rolled out.

A Day in the Life of a Surf Photographer

Armed with Instagram as his platform and the cellphone as his medium, Ryan set out to carve his identity in photography. Today, a typical day sees him wake before sunrise, drive down to a location (whose weather he has checked the night before) and plunge right into the water, where he uses the Optrix underwater housing to shoot.

“I just like the way waves look during sunrise. It’s so magical to be there in person and the best part pretty much only lasts 5–10 minutes. I like the challenge of lining up a wave shot in that short a time.”

Not Always an Easy Ride

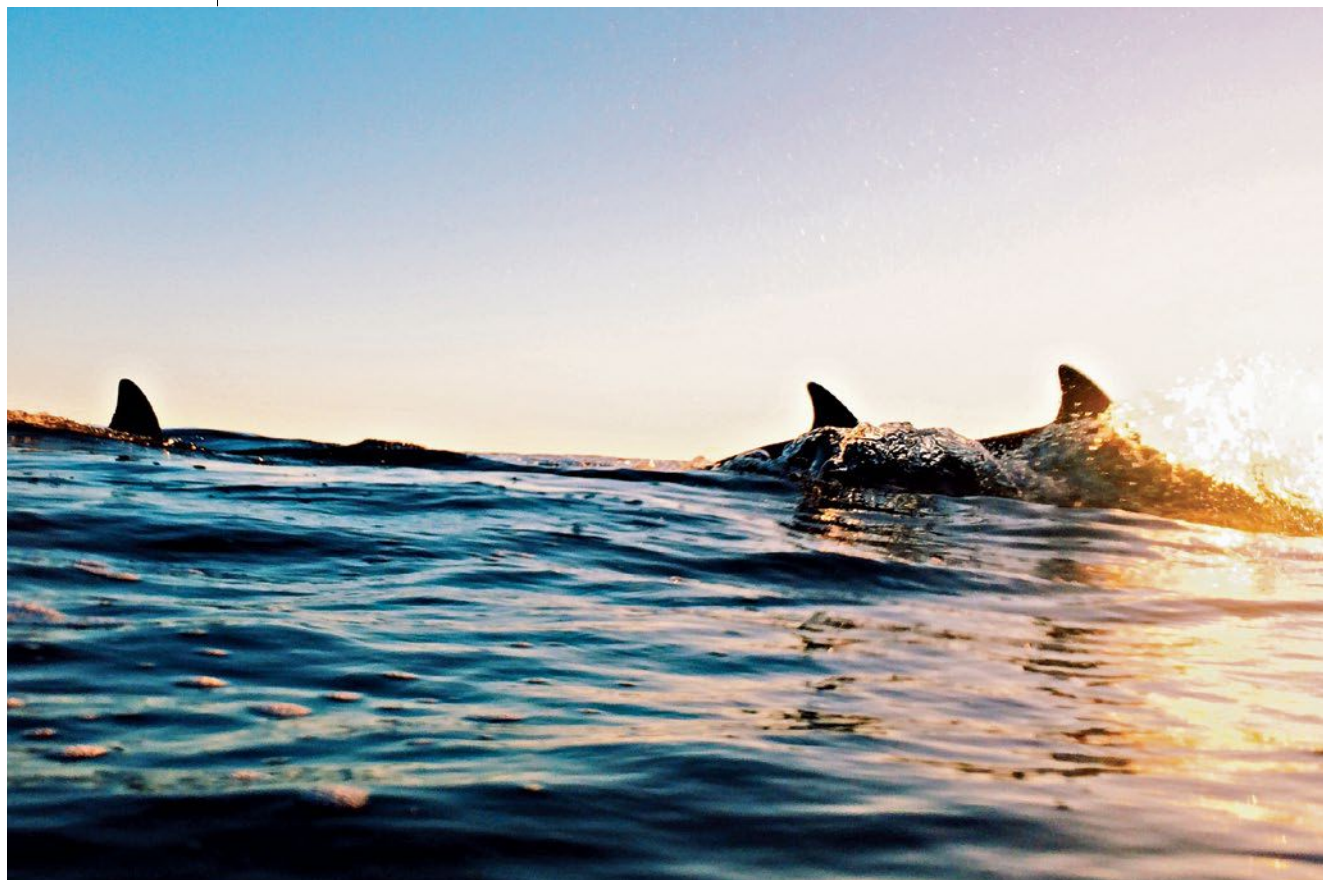
As is the case with several nature and adventure photographers, Ryan prefers



to shoot alone. “When you go alone, you don’t really talk, so you put all your energy into getting the best possible shot,” he says. “But, I tend to get into a few hairy situations by myself, so it’s probably not the best idea,” he adds with a half-shrug. ▶

➦ Even when he is shooting portraits, his backdrops are by the oceanside.

⚠ While shooting the waves can be risky, at the end of the day, the sun, sand and dolphins make it worth his while.





🔗 Ryan believes that Instagram has helped him better his photography. “When you don’t show your work to anyone, you don’t strive to improve. It helps because you know other people are going to see it.”

In the course of our conversation, Ryan narrated an incident, that reminded me of a line by Patrick Swayze’s character in the film *Point Break*. “Fear causes hesitation, and hesitation will cause your worst fears to come true.” Ryan’s incident goes something like this, “I really wanted to get the photo of a ship that involved me

walking for more than two hours in knee-high water across uncomfortable reef, with no shoes, at 5am. When I got to the ship, about 10 looters came crawling out of the ship and were staring me down. This was quite far out from land and I was feeling pretty vulnerable, so I took a few photos and got out of there!”



“Cellphones make photography accessible to a lot more people. Therefore, as an art form, it has acquired the potential to progress faster.”

A Job Well Done

If you look at Ryan's Instagram feed, initially there are photographs that were made as different series. But lately, I find Ryan's imagery going towards creating a great single image. It is interesting to see this route he is on, as most of his photographic learning has been through observation and curiosity.



This image was part of a series of three photographs made underwater—A rare occurrence in his work.

Ryan tends to find motivation in a variety of sources. “What often inspires me is anything done well, whether it’s a business, a plate of food, a motivated chef or a piece of music,” he says.

What is even more interesting, is the road that lies ahead for the young photographer. He has plans to revive a surfing magazine that stopped printing a while ago, along with a friend. “Being handed the keys to it, is pretty incredible,” he beams.

With his unique and fresh outlook coupled with an infectious enthusiasm to his work, the sky’s the limit for him! ☑

🔴 Ryan also sells prints of his work, simply because a lot of people have asked him for them. “I’m not trying to profit from the prints, but I just try to make something that I would like to buy.”



READERS' GALLERY

Better Cellphone Photography's readers were challenged to capture the different moods of children in this month's contest.

Presented by



➡ **Deep Slumber**
Kunga Tashi Lepcha,
Gangtok

What made me shoot this: I was drawn to the reflection on the window of the car, and how it created a very dream-like quality around the baby in the photograph.
What I learnt: I was very quiet and discreet while making the photograph, as I did not want to disturb and wake up the baby.
Shot with: Xiaomi Mi 3

GRAND PRIZE

The grand prize winner, gets a 4200mAh Godrej GP PowerBank, the perfect companion for cellphone and travel photographers.



All the nominees will also be featured on, betterphotography.in.

*Actual colour of the Powerbank may vary

➡ **The Little Sprinter**
Deepak Malik, New Delhi

What made me shoot this: While I was sitting in the metro, waiting to reach my destination, I noticed a young school boy whizzing past me.

What I learnt: Whenever children are around, you can always expect them to do something hilarious. To capture such moments, you should always keep your phone ready.
Shot with: Apple iPhone 4s



To be featured on these pages, participate in our contests by logging on to betterphotography.in/contests and win exciting prizes!

Honourable Mention



Calling Out to the Sky

Ajeet Pal Singh, Thanjavur

What made me shoot this: I made this photograph in a train, somewhere between Nagpur and Chennai. I noticed my daughter standing on the seat, calling out to the sun through the window. Her expression and reflection on the glass, inspired me to capture the moment.

What I learnt: Since the train was on the move, I had to be mindful of the constantly changing light.

Shot with: Apple iPhone 5C

Deep in Contemplation

Nidhi Sharma, New Delhi

What made me shoot this: As the evening sky absorbed the last rays of the sun, I found my niece on our building's terrace, gazing at the setting sun. I found the serenity of the entire scene very peaceful.

What I learnt: The colour scheme of your photograph plays a big role in conveying the mood that you're going for.

Shot with: Nokia Lumia 510

Honourable Mention



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- Torches
- Portable Powerbanks.

Better Pictures



Zhang Xiangli

He is a great nature lover, and with the help of his photographs, he hopes to spread the message of safeguarding the environment. He won the second prize in HIPA's *Life in Colour* category.

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“Despite the precarious location of the birds on the tree branch, the photograph invokes feelings of hope and joy.”

I shot this image some time between May and July, in the village of Sha Tin, in the Jiangxi province in China. It took me about a month to locate this family of rare Asian Paradise Flycatchers, who are otherwise not known to make frequent appearances. Once I located the birds, it took me about a week to capture this tantalising shot. I made sure that the background was plain and decluttered, so as to bring out the vibrant colours of the bird's feathers.





13 AWARD WINNING PHOTOGRAPHERS ON FRAMING A SLICE OF LIFE

While in conversation with 13 Hamdan International Photography Award winners, Conchita Fernandes uncovers the engaging stories behind their photographs, and also learns about the thought process behind their spectacular images.

Now into its fourth edition, the Hamdan International Photography Award recently concluded its *Life in Colour* themed edition.

Like every other year, this year too, saw photographers participate from across the globe, with 30,878 participants who submitted a total of 60,162 photographs. This time however, India topped the list of countries with the highest number of participants.

Photographers were encouraged to submit their images to categories like *General*, *Life in Colour*, *Night Photography* and *Faces (Black and White)*. It was also quite interesting to see a black and white category in a colour-themed competition.

There were a total of nine judges on the panel which included the likes of Aidan Sullivan, Alicia Adamopoulos, Gurdas Dua, Jassim Alawadhi, Maggie Gowan, Manolis Metzakis, Riccardo Busi, Tom Ang and Volker Frenzel.

TIP 1

Maintaining Anonymity in the Wild

If you are planning to photograph a particular nesting ground, you must ensure that you are in no way disrupting the environment around you. In case you notice that the birds are distressed, it means that they have sensed your presence. Take this as your cue to move away from the area.



Anurag Kumar

He completed his MFA in Photography at the Lucknow College of Arts and Crafts. Currently, he is a freelance commercial photographer with an interest in travel photography. He was HIPA's Grand Prize winner.

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TIP 2

Festivals are All About Colours

Whether you are photographing the Holi festival in India or the La Tomatina festival in Spain, make sure that you slightly increase your camera's saturation setting. Doing this will bring out the vibrancy of the event into your photographs.



“If it wasn’t for the sudden dash of blue, the photograph would have ended up looking like any other typical Holi image.”

At the time that I shot this picture, I was at Nandgaon near Mathura. The people here were celebrating Lathmar Holi, which is celebrated a few days before the actual Holi festival. In order to capture the energy and vibrancy of the area, I decided to stand on the rooftop of the nearby temple. This gave me a bird's-eye view of the explosion of colours below me. I also found it quite interesting to see how some of the worshippers sat still, while the revellers showered them with a barrage of colours.





Arun Bhat

He is a Bengaluru-based photographer, who for the past 10 years has extensively captured vivid travel photographs from South and South East Asia. He also enjoys travelling and conducting photography tours with Darter Photography, a venture co-founded by him. He won the first prize in HIPA's *Life in Colour* category.



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TIP 3

Listening to Your Thoughts

While some good images are a product of coincidences, the best photographs however, require careful planning, research and contemplation. Don't run from place to place in search of great pictures. Instead, settle down, take time to let your creative expressions unfold and observe keenly without an anxiety to perform. The results can surprise you.



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“I liked how the young monks in their red robes, added a dash of life and colour to the otherwise dull grey walls.”

I decided to spend the summer of 2014, documenting the life of monks at the Ki Monastery in Lahaul and Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh. Every evening, young monks were allowed some time off, which they spent playing. On one particular evening, the boys started giggling and chasing each other, and that was when I made the photograph. For me, the image signifies the true essence of spiritual practice that monks dedicate their life for, about living in the moment with fullest exuberance.



Danil Rudoï

He is an art photographer with a special interest in portrait photography. He has won several awards for his portrait work, and is HIPA's first prize winner in the *Faces (Black and White)* category.

"I have given the viewer an intimate look into the personality of the young woman. It is almost as if she is baring her soul for all to see."

When you set out to make a portrait of an individual, you are responsible for how to portray her. Even if the person is shy, it is up to the photographer to bring out her innermost qualities. This is exactly what I set out to do with Stella Maria, the young girl in the photograph. I did this by leaving the photograph in its rawest and most natural form.

TIP 4

Maintaining the Magic in the Eyes

Keeping the eyes sharp and in focus is the primary rule of portraiture. However, a lot of people forget about this when they make portraits. They don't realise that it is the eyes that actually draw the viewer's attention into the photograph, and that everything else in the picture is secondary.



Ken Geiger

He is the Deputy Director at *National Geographic* magazine, and is also the recipient of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize award. He won the second prize in HIPA's *Faces (Black and White)* category.

“Despite pointing my camera at her, the young girl’s composure did not falter even once. She simply continued to stare at me.”

In 1989, there was a terrible war raging between the Burmese troops and the ethnic Burmese Mon army. At the time, I was a staff photographer with *The Dallas Morning News* in Texas, United States, when I was sent to cover the war. The girl in the photograph was a child soldier recruited by the rebel groups. It was jarring to see her sitting emotionless with a M16 rifle beside her. This made me wonder about the several deaths that her young eyes must have witnessed.

TIP 5

Practice Seeing

If you want to improve your photography, it is essential that you constantly keep at it. Photograph whenever the opportunity arises. Let it come as a second nature to you, and if you practice it enough, it will turn into muscle memory. You will also learn to trust your instincts, and this will eventually lead to good photographs.

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**Harish Chavda**

He used to teach Mechanical Engineering full-time, but over the years he has reduced this to concentrate more on photography. He is also constantly involved in camera clubs, societies and other interest groups. He won the first prize in HIPA's *General* category.

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TIP 6**The Importance of Research**

In photography, you will never learn to anticipate the action, unless you have an idea about your subject or of its relevance. This is why, it is important to read as much as you can about the history of say, a festival or a sports event that you are covering. This knowledge will come in handy in ensuring that you are aware of the prime areas of action, thus resulting in great shots.

“While everybody was rooting for Adam Gemili, I decided to place my bets on the veteran sprinter Dwain Chambers, and even focused my lens on him. I now have a picture of a lion roaring to victory!”

37-year-old British track sprinter Dwain Chambers, was not the favourite pick at the 2012 Aviva UK Athletics Olympic trials in Birmingham. The 100 metre race was his one last shot at being a part of the English Olympic team. Despite the pessimism around him, he went on to prove his critics wrong by being the first to cross the finish line in 10.25 seconds.





Ali Rajabi

He has been a photographer and Photoshop and Lightroom instructor for more than a decade. He is also the founder of the Atrin Training Center of Photography. He won the second prize in HIPA's General category.

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TIP 7

Taking Chances

A lot of photography is about placing yourself in unlikely situations and putting your faith in things that may not necessarily work. This is perfectly okay. That's how you learn, and that's also how you end up with images that no one else may have.



"The photograph reminds me of a scene right out of a snow globe. I like how the snow has lent a whimsical quality to it."

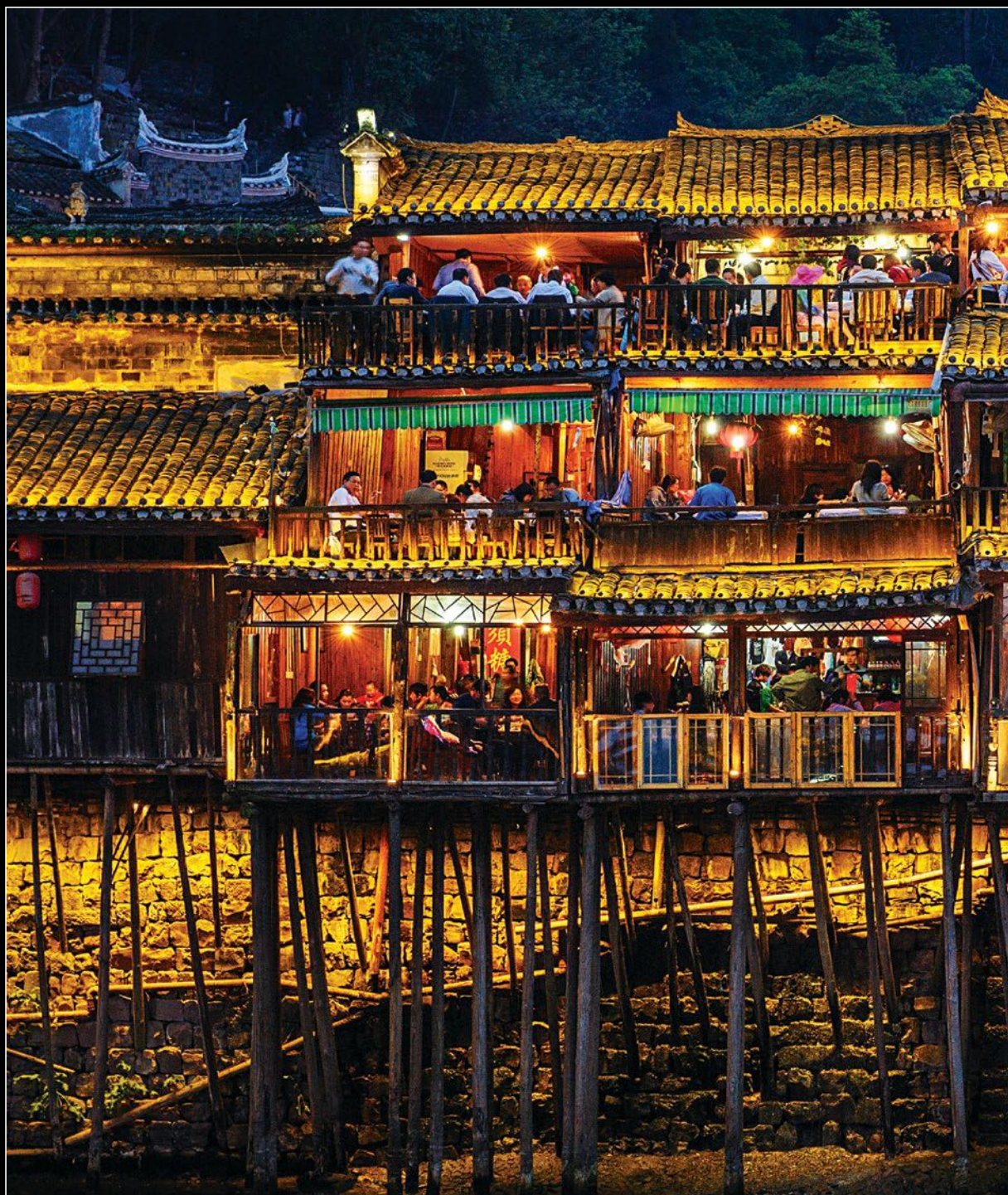
The image was shot at 2:30pm on January 2014, which also happened to be one of the coldest winters in Manhattan, New York. While I was walking down the street, I noticed how all the traffic lights were red at the same time, and with the people crossing the street, it all lent a very serendipitous feeling to the moment. So I hurriedly ran towards the middle of the road and made about three photographs.





Peng Li

He began his photographic journey 10 years ago, in 2005. Prior to this, he worked for a government association in China. His deep interest in exploring social issues has led him to win the first prize in HIPA's *Night Photography* category.



TIP 8

Making Images with a Message

It is simply not enough to know how to make a technically sound photograph. There has to be an underlying theme or message to the image. Unless this purpose is not evident, then your photograph may not hold as much value.



“Standing in front of the Diaojielou house made me feel like as if I was witnessing multiple stories, all at the same time.”

Diaojielou houses are native to the ethnic communities in the south western provinces of China. The houses are constructed on wooden pillars and are usually found on sloping areas. Although they look precarious, the structures are strong and house several restaurants and hotels. Each section of the structure is always brimming with activity. So rather than being an architectural shot, it is the documentation of various stories and activities going on in the different establishments. It is almost like an amalgamation of the old with the new.



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Zeki Yavuzak

He is a teacher by profession, and enjoys photography on the side. He won the third prize in HIPA's *Life in Colour* category.

“I was quite surprised to see how all the different shades of red came together harmoniously, to create this photograph bursting with colour.”

In preparation for the winter months, women in Aydin, a place in Turkey, dry vegetables in necklace-like strings. The colourful preparation of red peppers, eggplant and zucchini are generally made by women, teenagers and children, as a means of earning extra money. As I made my way through the rows of vegetables, I happened to notice this young girl. Despite having worked the entire day, she was still brimming with energy and enthusiasm.

I guess it was her happiness that I was most drawn to, which resulted in this vibrant photograph.

TIP 9

Using Shallow Depth of Field

If you notice that the scene before you has a lot of activity going on in the background, just use a shallow depth of field to isolate your main subject from the clutter, and bring it to prominence.



Mujeeb Rahman

His keen interest in the rural and urban life in India and abroad, has taken him to over 25 countries across the globe. He won the fourth prize in HIPA's *Life in Colour* category.

TIP 10

Adding a Spurt of Colour

The more the colours in your frame, the more dynamic the photograph. With kids, especially, it is a good idea to play with vibrant colours. Bright hues make the children look energetic and excited. This can also help you make the photos look fun and full of life. However, ensure that you balance the colours perfectly, so that they do not end up overpowering the children in the scene.

“To me, nothing expresses joy as much as the young beaming child sprinting around in excitement.”

Made at one of the Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Shimla, the photograph was in fact an unexpected encounter. I was busy shooting the area around, when suddenly I noticed the boy jumping in the air trying to reach the flags. It made me think that even though these boys have vowed to lead the lives of contemplative monks, at the end of the day, they are all young spirited children.





Ho Sung Wee

A contractor by profession, he took up photography five years ago. He has also won over a hundred awards for his images, including the second prize in HIPA's *Night Photography* category.

**TIP 11****Getting it Right the First Time**

Today, a lot of photographers cannot do without processing their images on Photoshop or Lightroom. This shouldn't be the case, and more emphasis must be placed on getting it right the first time, before releasing the shutter.

“To many, this photograph may appear to be a dramatic and exciting look at the life of fishermen in Taiwan. However, the image is also a reminder of the dying tradition of the sulfuric fire fishing method in the country.”

By adding water to sulfuric soil, fishermen in the Jinshan area of Taiwan, use the light emitted by the acetylene mixture to attract the Harengula fish. The light sends the fish into a frenzy, which the fishermen waste no time in taking advantage of, with the help of nets.

However, it is sad that only three to four such boats are still in existence.



Yvon Buchmann

He takes inspiration from masters of photography like Robert Doisneau, Édouard Boubat, Henri Cartier-Bresson and others. He is the recipient of the 2015 Sony WPO National Award, and has even won the fourth prize in HIPA's General category.


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TIP 12

Leading the Viewer's Eyes

Incorporating lines is another way to create a compositionally strong photograph. Lines help to generate different moods in the viewer too. It nudges them to linger longer on the image, as it gives their eyes a sense of direction.





“This photograph is a depiction of how man often finds himself in the middle of conflicting scenarios.”

I shot this image in a small French town called Bollwiller. The photograph in fact, is part of a series that I previously worked on titled *Passing Time*. With the help of my son, I composed the image in a way that it symbolised the fleetingness of time, and how it waits for no one.



James Singlador

He is a Civil Engineer by profession. Besides photography, he has other varied interests as well, which include traveling, mountaineering and cooking. He won the fourth prize in HIPA's General category.

“In many ways, this photograph encapsulates my adventurous and free-spirited nature, just like the expressions on the children’s face.”

The *kawa* hot bath is native to the residents of the western Visayas region in Philippines. Here, children often enjoy a quick afternoon dip in a wok. Medicinal leaves are also added to the bath, as the locals believe in its healing properties. The gleeful and inviting expressions of the children prompted me to make the photograph.

TIP 13

Choosing a Good Vantage Point

A unique vantage point can change the manner in which an ordinary activity or ritual is perceived. So continue practising till you find the right one.

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ON ASSIGNMENT

I Love MGR

Cop Shiva examines the polarity between fantasy and reality, and the roles people play publicly and privately, as Vidyasagar masquerades as TAMILIAN actor MGR.

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When shooting in public places, people would often approach Vidyasagar looking for blessings, taken his impersonation of MGR.

My Assignment

Description

I am fascinated with the idea of masquerade and the roles people play in public and private. This led me to document Vidyasagar's life.

Duration

Six years

Notes

The drama would unfold before my eyes. I had to be sharp enough to capture the moment.



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⌚ Being MGR, who is a larger than life icon, and the recognition that came with it, was a big boost to Vidyasagar's ego.

⌚ Vidyasagar's parents, I believe, were extremely concerned about him. But eventually, they learnt to accept him, mainly because of how strongly he felt about MGR.

Tamil film icon and politician M G Ramachandran's (MGR) presence is felt in Karnataka in many ways. His movies are played and replayed by the local television station continuously. His face is on display in the numerous banners that appear in any city of South India, where he is revered.

You could see it even more in Bengaluru resident, Vidyasagar, who woke up every morning, transformed himself into MGR and carried on with his daily routine.

My first reaction on meeting him was curiosity. The juxtaposition of Vidyasagar, a very peculiar character himself, and MGR,

who had an overpowering influence on the politics and cinema of Southern India, was very difficult to overlook.

My Perspective

In my practice, I focus on people and portraiture as a genre. Vidyasagar's life was like a living photo performance and I wanted to get under the skin of this character through my camera. My initial fascination became a passion to know Vidyasagar and his life. I always wondered about the reality behind the grease paint and his lifelong passion to be MGR and I did it the way I knew best...with my camera.

My Equipment

I have used a Canon EOS 550D, a Nikon D80 and plenty of memory cards!




In his wedding pictures you can see him as MGR already. He married twice, and both his wives accepted him right from the beginning.

Tips on Documenting Someone's Personal Life

- **Make Their Life a Part of Your Own:** Breaking the ice and becoming involved with your subject is very important. You are, after all, attempting to photograph their life, which is private and personal.
- **Respect Your Subject:** Do not make of the camera a barrier between you and what is happening in front of you.
- **Become Invisible:** While it is important to be involved with your subject, it is equally important to become a fly on the wall. The aim is to capture the reality of the moment in its most natural self.

The Process

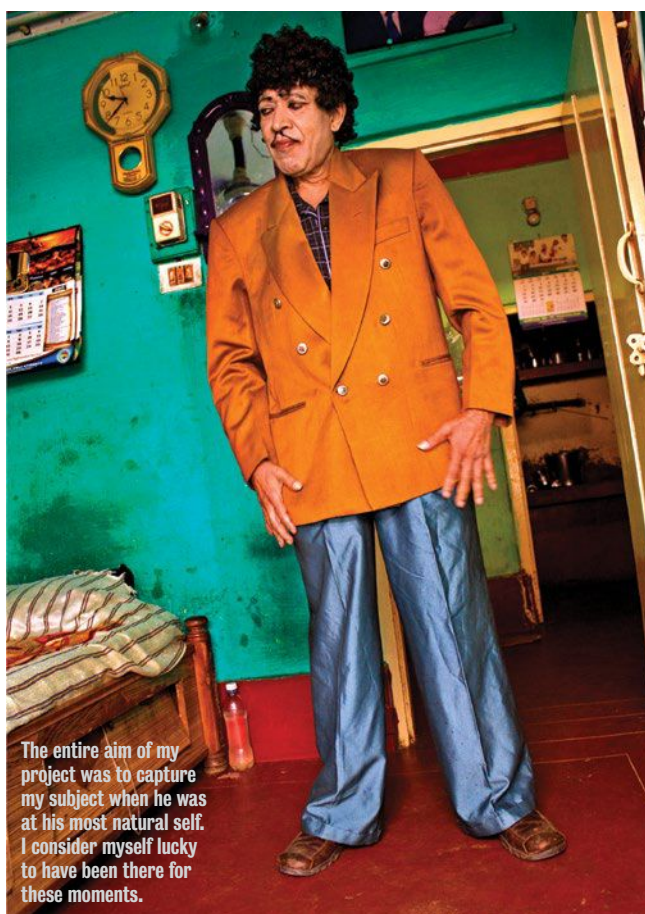
Before I actually began photographing Vidyasagar, I built a strong relationship with him. I met him and his family several times without my camera. I spent time with them, cared for them and eventually my presence became familiar for them, and that is when I could start documenting his routine and his transformations.

I documented Vidyasagar's life for more than six years until his untimely demise a few months ago. He was extremely passionate about MGR and I believe that not only the actor's charisma but also Vidyasagar's shines through the photographs. At the end of the day, Vidyasagar teaches us to stick to our beliefs no matter what. 

➤ For Vidyasagar's children, seeing him as MGR was the most natural thing in the world.

— As told to *Natasha Desai*

To see more of Cop Shiva's work, you can visit www.copshiva.com



The entire aim of my project was to capture my subject when he was at his most natural self. I consider myself lucky to have been there for these moments.



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Email: editor@betterphotography.in

A wide angle will help you capture the important elements that become a part of a frame.



Sree Kumar E V

STORYTELLING ON THE STREETS

Finding Humour in the Everyday

The everyday exists in all its beauty on the streets. It combines glamour, irony, happiness, honesty and sadness all at once. So, why should your street photography story be serious? Funny incidents are always happening around us as we go about our daily lives. Train stations, parks, tea shops can be witness to a humorous moment. Keep your camera ready and shoot!

Make Use of Juxtaposition

Street photography establishes relationships amongst multiple subjects. The use of juxtaposition in photography helps balance the two contrasting features. Pair any two or more opposite elements together and watch as the moment transcends into a more meaningful one.

Juxtapositions can be found everywhere, in big cities to little towns. For example, an old man with a young boy, the rich with the poor... the storytelling opportunities are aplenty.

Atypical Points of View

It may sound like a cliché, but the only way in which you can discover new meaning to the various moments that unfold around you is to explore the frame with different angles.

As soon as you find a subject to make a photo of, try as many angles as you possibly can. Even if it means lying on

📌 Using unique vantage points will help you better express the photo story. Never stop looking for a new way to frame a moment.



Tejas Kudtarkar



TECHNOLOGY FOR CREATIVITY

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the ground, you should certainly do it. Exploring different vantage points is key to find the perfect frame.

Make Strong Edits

Just like telling a story, each photo you make on the streets has the potential to be a great story itself. Once you have made a substantial amount of images, start looking at the photos you have shot. Begin by selecting the best pictures of the lot and giving them a sequence.

Arrange the images in a way that a story flows through the frames. Eliminate the images that disrupt the flow or do not fit in with the rest. This might help you find a whole new series, which just might be completely different from what you had intended to shoot.

THE MAGIC OF SHADOWS

Making Shadows the Main Subject

They follow us around wherever we go, but are often disregarded as potential photography subjects. We are talking about your shadow, which when used well, can make for a great picture.

The best way to capture your own shadow is to shoot against a monochromatic background, for instance, a terrain of lush green grass or a brightly coloured wall. Shooting your own shadow is also a unique take on the selfie, in an inverted way.

Creating Conceptual Art

Shadows can manifest themselves in ways that a human figure may not. In that sense, employing shadows can be useful in creating stronger messages. Think of various concepts that you can execute with the use of graphical shadows. For instance, if there is a wall with a lot of spray painted words, adding a shadow will offset the writing on the wall. You could also position yourself in interesting ways, perhaps recreating the shadow puppets we were so fond of making during our childhood.

Wait for the Right Time

The position of the sun in the sky has the most important role in determining how



Subhoodeep Banerjee

QUICK TIP

One of the best source of natural light to make portraits is through windows. The light is naturally diffused and is flattering.

dramatically a particular shadow will fall. Sunrise and sunset are the best time of the day to find longer shadows. Before sunrise and sunset would be a good time to explore various positions where you feel the best shadows will be created.

Your own bedroom can be witness to graphical shadows. Around 4 in the afternoon, draw all your curtains to see the shadow of your window grill falling on your wall.

➔ **Combine the shadow with the subject itself to add a whole new dimension to the photograph.**



Shadows look best when they are offset against a monochromatic surface.

Asis Kumar Sanyal

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Creating Patterns

The elusive nature of shadows is a great way to observe the changing patterns they make. The change in sunlight will give you different intensities of shadows, so be sure you look out for those.

SUBTLE WEDDING MOMENTS

Look for Subtlety

Weddings, Indian ones especially, are loud and boisterous. This doesn't mean that quieter moments are not unfolding in the wedding venue. While you are keeping an eye on the bigger picture, don't forget to observe the blink and miss moments that may be happening around you. For instance, the bride's father may be silently wiping tears from his eyes, or a wedding guest might be laughing at a joke.

Befriend the Family

If you have been hired to photograph the entire wedding ceremony, you must take the effort to introduce yourself to the bride and groom's family. Try and do this several days before the wedding... this will help the family become more comfortable around you and when you do begin shooting, they will not act stiff in front of the camera.

QUICK TIP

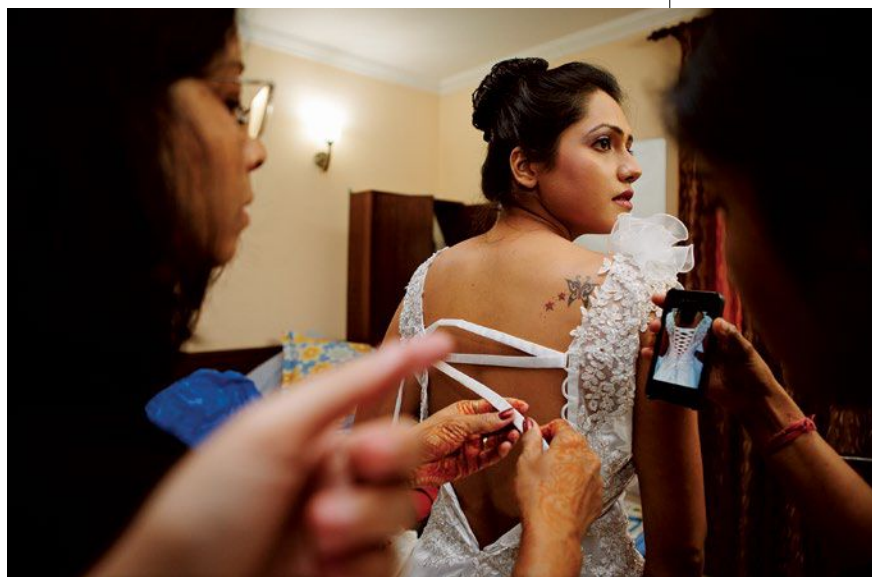
Shoot one picture every hour, from the same spot. Not only will it be a fun record, but also narrate an interesting story.

Moreover, you will find it easier to get access to behind the scenes moments like intimate rituals, like a bride's mother adorning her daughter with jewellery.

Be a Fly on the Wall

If you want to photograph the best behind the scenes moment, you have to become as inconspicuous as possible. Blend in with the wedding guests and be very observant

⬇ At a wedding, even the smallest moment can be the most memorable.



Priyam Malhotra



Niklesh Malkani

➦ The wedding guests will have just as many unforgettable expressions and moments as the bride and groom!

of whatever is happening around you. Don't tell your subjects to pose, instead wait for them to spontaneously engage with each other for the most natural reactions.

Know What to Capture

Make sure you have the complete itinerary of the day before you begin shooting. This will allow you to previsualise the kind

of moments you can get behind the scenes. Remember to start shooting before and after a particular event, because that's where the real behind the scenes action is unfolding. For instance, before a *haldi* ceremony, you can capture the family members scurrying to prepare for the rituals and capture the emotions of the family members during the quieter moments after the ceremony.

Participate in the 'Reader's Tip Contest' on betterphotography.in/contests to win a chance to be featured in the magazine and win exciting prizes!

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READER'S TIP

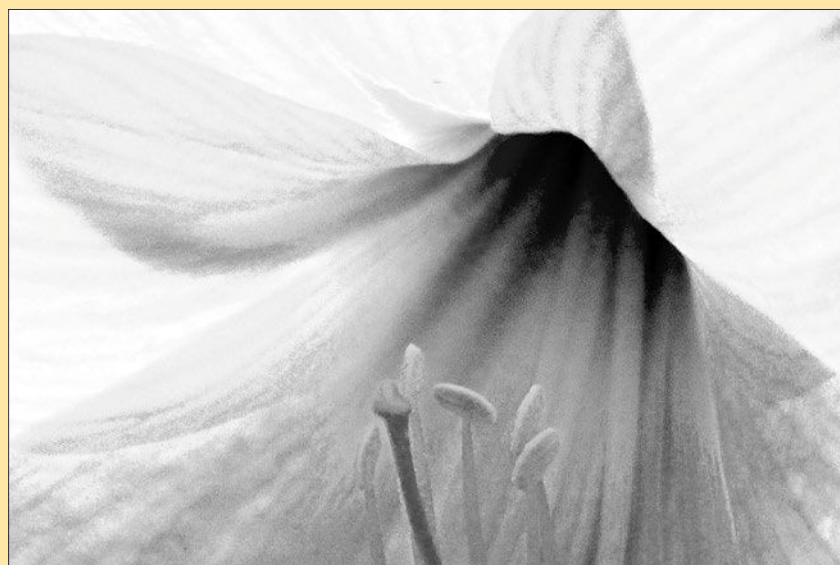
An Unconventional Look at Flowers

When you think of flowers, you always imagine bright colours, vibrant textures and beautiful patterns. What if we turned that notion around completely, and present a flower in the most stripped down version possible?

This is what I set about, when I decided to photograph a flower. A simple close-up is the first thing that will come to mind, so I thought of doing something different. Instead of showcasing the flower from the outside, I chose to look at it from the inside, and I think it worked well.

I only wanted to show an outline of a flower, to make it barely recognisable. This is the reason why I converted the image to black and white. The stamens subtly tell the viewer that it is, in fact, a flower they are looking at. I like the idea that a single subject can be open to so many interpretations. Even in its simplicity, it is beautiful. Best of all, this is how I saw the flower and this is why it is unique to me.

—Vijay Kumar Puthiyaveetal



Vijay Kumar Puthiyaveetal

Converting an image to B&W will show you various patterns and textures you may miss otherwise.

Q & A

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BRIEFLY

What is a Dutch tilt in composition?

Hypothetically, let's say that you have set the camera so that the X-axis is parallel to the horizon and the Y-axis is parallel to vertical lines in the frame. Now tilt the camera along either one of the axes. This is referred to as the Dutch tilt or the German angle. By doing so, the framing disorients the viewer, who attempts to come to terms with vertical lines that are now slanting. Thus, creating a feeling of uneasiness and discomfort. The technique is great when shooting portraits with vertical and horizontal lines in the background.

On Angle of View

Some compact cameras mention that, "the focal length, 4.3–180mm has an angle of view equivalent to that of 24–1000mm lens in 35mm format." Could you please tell me what "angle of view equivalent to that of 24–1000mm lens" refers to?

Arunangshu Datta, *New Delhi, via email*

Think about the field of view of your eyes when you are looking in one fixed direction. If you do not include peripheral vision, the field of view is between 45° to 50°. This is considered to be 'normal'. This is also the angle of view produced by a 50mm lens on a full-frame sensor. (Thus, making the 50mm lens a 'normal' lens.) If you narrow this field of view, you get telephoto view. If you broaden it, you get wide angle FoV. Zoom lenses allow you to diminish or broaden the field of view by zooming in or out.

With the popularity of regular 35mm film, it became a standard for comparison of focal lengths. With the coming of digital imaging, sensor sizes became much smaller than regular 35mm film. Thus, the focal length required to create a 'normal' field of view also reduced.



A 50mm lens has a 'normal' field of view for a 35mm sensor, but the same FoV is produced at about 9mm on a compact camera with a 1/2.3-inch sensor. Continually, 4.3mm has the approximate FoV of a 24mm lens and 180mm becomes roughly 1000mm.

JPEG vs RAW vs PSD vs TIFF

Can you explain the difference between the various image formats that photographers regularly use?

Puniya Aggarwal, *New Delhi, via email*

RAW is a format that stores the largest amount of image data, as captured by the sensor when you release the shutter, with minimal or no editing. If you enjoy processing your images, this format will give you the most detail to play with. Depending on the camera you use, the file format for RAW will differ—CR2 (Canon), NEF (Nikon), ARW (Sony) and so on. However, this format is not viewable without a RAW editor.

DNG was created by Adobe as a way of creating an industry standard format for RAW. Often a RAW update for Photoshop may not be immediately available. In such situations, you can convert your RAW files into DNG and continue editing. It is also the default format for Pentax cameras and RAW-capable Android phones.

JPEG images are default for electronic viewing today. As a result of lossy compression of the RAW file, JPEGs have significantly smaller file sizes. In contrast to JPEGs, TIFFs are the relatively lossless format for image viewing. They are also

WHAT IS

Time Slice Photography

As the name suggests, this technique captures slices of time in a single photograph. This is done by photographing the same frame numerous times and then combining them together. Warning: Not for the impatient photographer.

Start by Scouting

Finding a great spot to shoot from is paramount. Set your camera on a tripod, so that the composition remains constant and start shooting single images at regular intervals of time. Depending on how detailed you want your final image to be, this interval can be from being 10 minute gaps to shooting every 30 seconds. As much as possible get things right in-camera itself.

The Best Time to Shoot

Have your setup ready at least an hour before the Golden Hours and shoot for an hour after they pass.

The variations in light will be maximum during this time. If it is a cityscape you are shooting, we recommend shooting in the evening as you will be able to capture the building and street lights as they illuminate the night sky.

Beginning the Edit

Select between 50–100 images that show the best gradation. You will need a layer-based editing software for this technique to work. Import all the images (preferably RAWs to maximise the colours in the final image) into Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom and edit them individually to get the most colour out of them.

Slice Away

Let each image be on a separate layer, each with a layer mask of its own. Using the Rectangular Marquee Tool select the slice you want to keep. Now invert the selection using CTRL + I and mask out the rest of the image from that layer. Do this for all the layers, until

you have your image. With this technique, however, the individual slices will be noticeable in the final picture. If you want to avoid this from showing up in the frame, apply a slight amount of Gaussian Blur (from the Filter menu) to each Layer Mask. Keep the amount of Blur the same. This will soften the edges that appear in the image.



Miguel Mendez

Formulaic Conundrum

The focal length of a lens is calculated as the distance between the lens and the image plane, when focused at infinity. If that is the formula, why is the length of my 200mm lens only 136mm?

Dhruv Solanki, *via email*

What you mentioned stands true for simple lens designs using a single lens element. Here the barrel literally has to be almost the length of the focal length for focus to be achieved on the film or sensor plane, with the lens focused at infinity.

The highest quality lenses in the world are constructed this way, with single focal lengths and relatively simple optics. However, most lenses today have complex optical

constructions. They use refraction and multiple lens elements to bend the light, to reduce the length of the lens.

To reduce the elongation of the barrel needed to focus at closer distances, different lens groups within the lens move in relation to each other. The resultant aberrations caused by complex designs are then taken care of with special lens coatings, aspherical elements, and glass made of materials with low refractive indexes. An example here would be lenses that move inwards towards the middle of the zoom range and out again at the extreme ends of the zoom range, as opposed to the push/pull zoom lenses of old. While the formula holds true for simple lenses, there are many factors that affect calculating precise parameters for complex lenses.

BRIEFLY

The images I made looked properly exposed on the LCD. However, when viewed on a computer they were underexposed. Help!

The LCD screen of your camera may have been set at auto brightness. As a result, if you are setting exposure values or exposure compensation, based on what you are seeing on the screen, the images may be underexposed. Instead, rely on the metering that your camera is showing you and calculate accordingly.

the preferred choice for photographers when it comes to printing their photos. This is because it stores a larger amount of image data, tonal range and detail in shadows and highlights when compared to JPEGs. TIFF also lets you save the image with individual Photoshop layers.

PSD is the native Photoshop format to save your work. In addition to saving layers, you can save filter settings, minor corrections and all the various changes you make to the edit. However, PSD files are quite large and not as compatible with other editing software, unlike TIFFs and JPEGs.

Mind Your i's and p's

What is the difference between 24p, 25p and 50p in video? Which one should I be using?

Ravi Ghosh, *Kolkata, via email*

The number indicates the frame rate (number of frames per second) at which you are recording video. Filmmakers used 24 frames per second as the standard for making movies. There is no significant difference in the output quality at 24p, 25p or 30p except when it comes to direct output to TV screens. 30p and 60p is used in countries (USA and Canada) that use a 60Hz power grid to run TVs. In most other countries, including India, the power supply is 50Hz. Here, you should shoot at 25p and 50p. 50p and 60p will allow you to make slightly slo-mo videos. However, for realistic slow motion, you will need a camera that shoots at 120fps and higher.

Whether the number is followed by an 'i' or a 'p' tells you if the video being shot is an interlaced or progressive scan. With progressive scans the video shoots 25 individual frames. In the case of interlaced scans, though the video has only 25 frames, it shows you only half a frame at a time

thus giving the impression of 50fps. This was done to have less flicker when recording fast moving subjects while simultaneously saving on bandwidth. However, as a result the clarity is hampered when you compare it to 25p video.

Lead In

What is the best way to use single point perspective effectively?

Mohan Sankhe, *via email*

Single point perspective uses abstract lines within the composition of the photo to draw the user to a point of interest. The "lines" here can be any object from the road to architectural lines of buildings, trees that add to the composition.

There are two broad uses for this technique. One is to lead the viewer's attention to the main subject in the frame. The second application leads the viewer into the image to a point of nothingness, called a vanishing point. This has a more metaphorical connect with the viewer and can suggest either positive or negative emotions depending on the context of the photo.



Aaditya Nair

➔ Here, the individual lamps of the chandelier act as the leading lines that draw the viewer towards the subject of the image.





Manish Mamtani

- He is a self-taught, avid photographer whose work has been published in various periodicals like *National Geographic*, *Vanity Fair* and *Nature's Best Photography*.
- Manish went to the USA as an IT consultant, but now plans to take up photography as a full-time career.
- His favourite pastimes are mimicking Bollywood actors and listening to *ghazals*.

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The Starry Sky Chaser

Manish Mamtani journeys across the landscapes of USA, in search of sparkling skies. Natasha Desai quizzes the photographer about these celestial bodies.

GREAT MASTERS

Augustus Washington

The African-American
daguerreotypist

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1000 WORDS

A roundup of the best
photographs from
mainstream media

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WPOY 2014-2015 NOMINEES

The nominees of
India's biggest wedding
photography awards

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Many of his photographs
feature landscapes
juxtaposed against
the night sky. This is
to showcase the
enormity of the sky that
envelops our world.



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🔧 The most important aspects of Manish's gear are his tripod and shutter-release cable. Without these, camera shake will be inevitable at the high ISOs required to shoot the night sky.

Our childhood experiences are often our companions through adulthood. I find that these experiences manifest themselves in ways we would never really think of. Growing up in Nagpur, Manish Mamtani could be found

atop his house on most nights. On the terrace, the skies revealed their stunning beauty to him. He would look out for constellations and formations as he fell asleep in their glow.

This fascination with the night sky still finds a way into Manish's photographs, as

🔧 Manish created this panorama by stitching together seven vertical photographs. This is because of the vastness of the Milky Way galaxy.



TIPS BY MANISH

- Nature and wildlife sanctuaries are open only during certain periods. Make sure you research the best times to visit.
- Being creative is as important as technical knowledge. Reinvent your photos every time you find yourself shooting a similar subject.

📸 Manish keeps himself constantly updated about natural phenomena that are about to occur, allowing him to prepare for a trip in advance.

he sets out on frequent trips to capture the night skies of America. “To me, the stars are not just sparkling dots in the sky... they are prized jewels visible to those who seek them.”

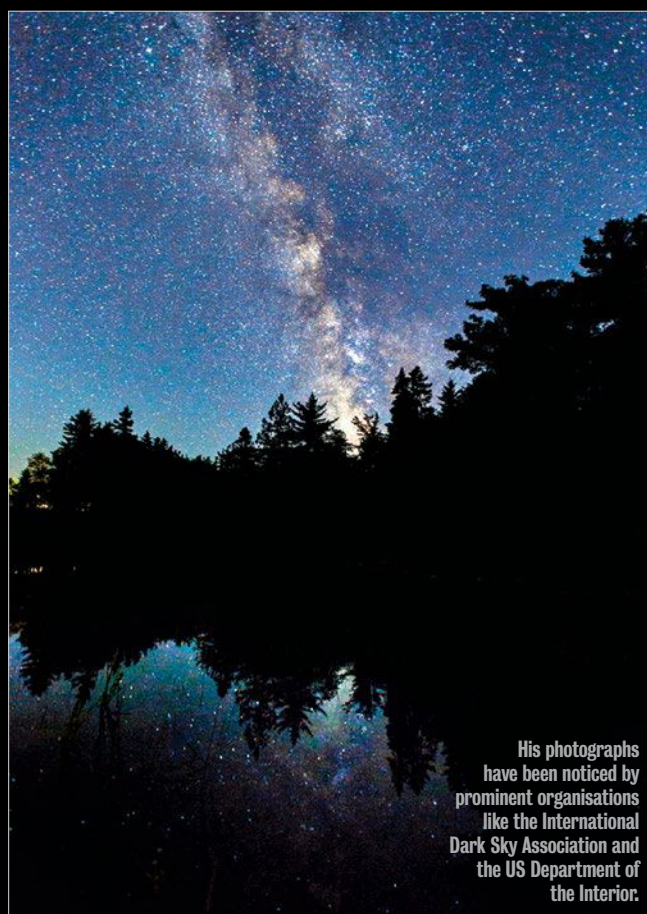
Wanderlust Takes Over

Manish began photographing the different landscapes he encountered on his travels for work, several times a month. He grew so fond of exploring the outdoors that he continued shooting through the weekend, instead of making his way back home.

These wanderings led to several experiences that have seared themselves in his memory. “I will never forget the first time I saw the Aurora Borealis in Glacier National Park, or the first time I saw a meteor shower in Arches National Park, or even the time I saw a bear in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park!”

In Solidarity With Nature

A visit to the Yosemite National Park in 2010 found Manish falling hopelessly



His photographs have been noticed by prominent organisations like the International Dark Sky Association and the US Department of the Interior.





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⚙️ Manish stacks several 30sec exposures of star trails in an image editing software like Adobe Photoshop, to create a long trail.

in love with the place. In what can only be described as a serendipitous moment, Manish soon discovered Ansel Adams, and his odes to the Yosemite National Park, in the form of iconic images.

Photographing the majestic sights of nature carries its own set of challenges.

With a tenacity to find the best possible settings and conditions for his frames, Manish revisits places for as long as it takes to get the best possible result.

“Weather in the USA can be very unpredictable, especially when it comes to night skies. The change in season also makes a lot of difference. If I visit a place in spring with lush greens, I come back in a few months to find the same place covered with vivid fall colors or even snow.”

Manish usually goes out to shoot alone, although his wife occasionally accompanies him. “Even though I shoot by myself, I never feel any kind of loneliness. I feel almost complete whenever I am close to nature. It is what drives me to show everyone the real beauty of the landscapes around us. Being one with nature can put many things into perspective, like nothing else!”

🔧 To control the spectrum of light in his infrared photography, he uses external filters like the 590nm with his modified Canon 6D camera.

GADGETS & GEAR

- Manish uses a Canon EOS 5D Mark III and a Canon EOS 7D for landscapes and wildlife.
- His lenses include a Canon EF 8-15mm f/4L Fisheye USM, EF 16-35mm f/2.8L II USM, EF 24-70mm f/4L IS USM and a 70-200 f/2.8L with an extender.






The Whole Spectrum of Colour


A friend's influence soon led Manish to explore infrared photography. He modified his Canon EOS 6D so that he could make infrared photographs. "This allowed me to paint the world with the hues of my imagination."

Much like mankind's desire to go where no man has gone before, Manish's next frontier is to explore deep sky photography. "You never know... I may

even spot a UFO some day," he says with a chuckle.


I see a sense of wonder in Manish, probably brought on by his peering into the skies. "There is so much out there that we are unaware of. I appreciate our existence, which is frankly, nothing more than a tiny dot amongst billions of galaxies." 

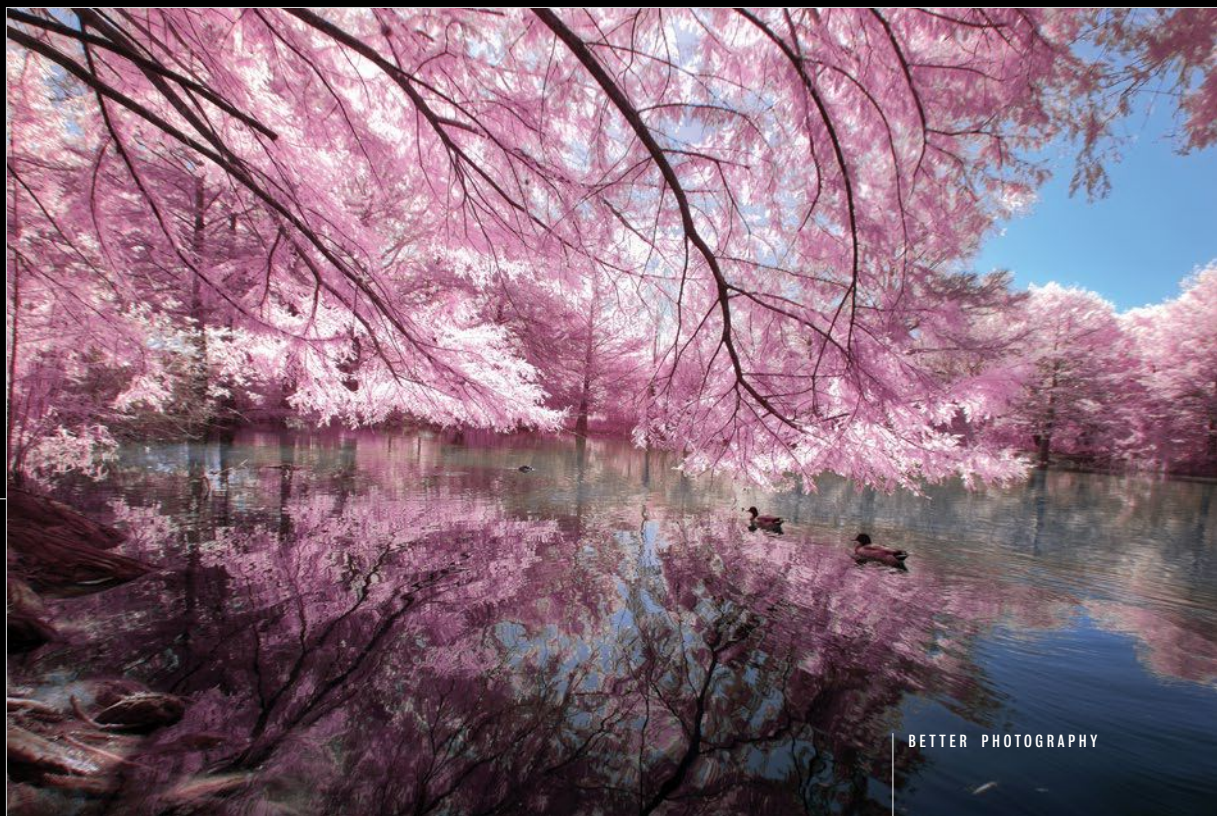
You can view more of Manish's photographs at www.manishmamtani.com

 He looks out for moonless nights, in order to get the darkest skies. He also prefers shooting far away from the cities, where the light pollution is the least.

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"I don't think the night skies will ever cease to amaze me. With each trip, I discover something new."

 Manish realises the importance of being one's own harshest critic. He often revisits his photographs to understand his mistakes and figure out what he could have done better.



Chancy Brown, Sargeant
at Arms of the Liberian
Senate, 1860.

Augustus Washington

Tracing the history of African American photographers, Supriya Joshi chanced upon the works of Augustus Washington. She reveals his unforgettable story.

Some of the most well-known photographers from the 19th century faced extreme adversities and came out of the ordeal with success. One of them was Augustus Washington, amongst the few African American daguerreotypists whose career has been documented. While researching the life and works of Washington, I came across many photographs shot by him, but I could not find a photograph of him.

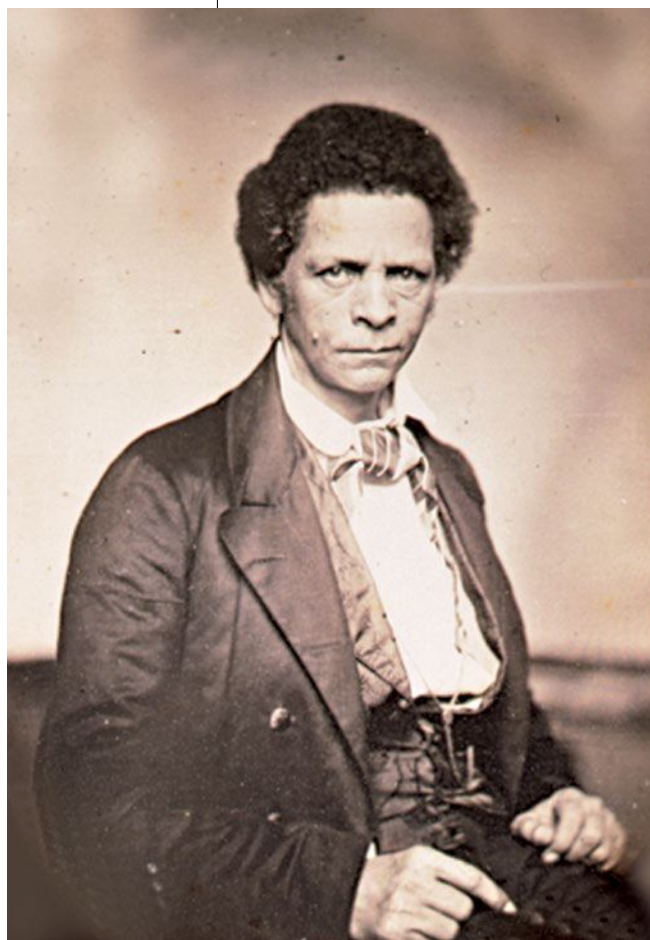
📍 Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the first and seventh president of Liberia, 1851.

This struck me in a strange way that despite being a photographer, the world would not know his face.

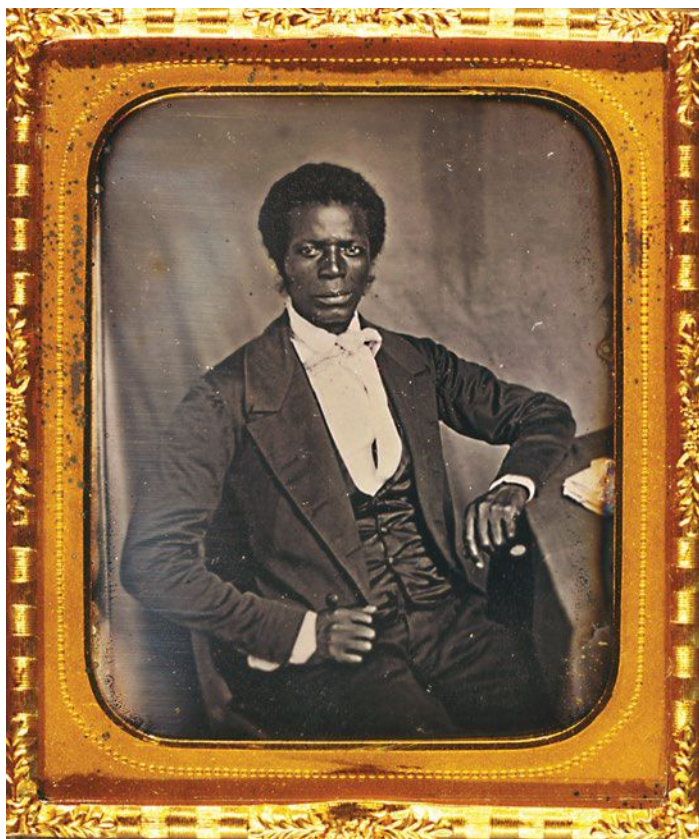
The Need to Learn

Washington grew up in the Americas of the 1820s, a time when African Americans were denied even the most basic rights. Against all convention, all he wanted to do was study. He struggled to get admission into various educational institutions across America, ▶

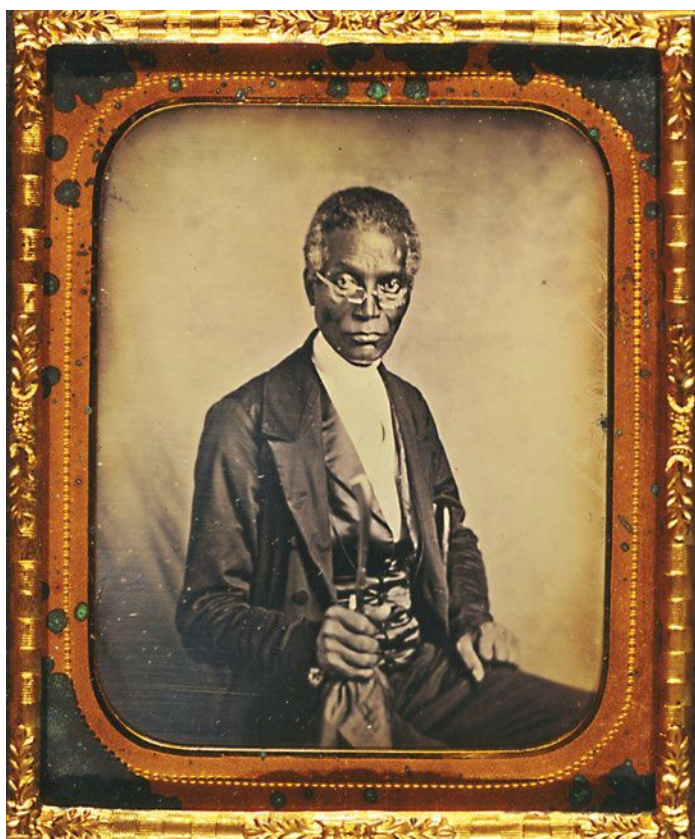
📍 Unidentified woman, presumed member of the Urias McGill family.



All images from The Library of Congress



James Mux Priest, the first Presbyterian African American missionary sent to Liberia.



Philip Coker, clergyman and missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

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when he finally got an entry into Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, in 1843.

Unidentified man.

It was here that he learned how to make

daguerreotypes and work in a darkroom during his freshman year.

Realising the Potential

Unfortunately, he was under severe debt, so he had to give up college and move to Hartford, Connecticut. Washington was an enterprising man, so he set up his own photo studio in 1846 for earning an income.

There were not a lot of photo studios in Hartford at the time, which worked extremely well towards Washington's advantage. He took out full-page advertisements in abolitionist newspapers, which offered daguerreotype portraits between 50 cents to 10 dollars, a princely sum back then, but still inexpensive for a process and art that was just becoming popular. "Why should not the Daguerreotype be within the reach of everybody?" the ad asked, "While others are advocating every man a house, free soil and free speech, it remains for Washington to advocate and furnish free Daguerreotypes, for the next 60 days."

An Exclusive Clientele

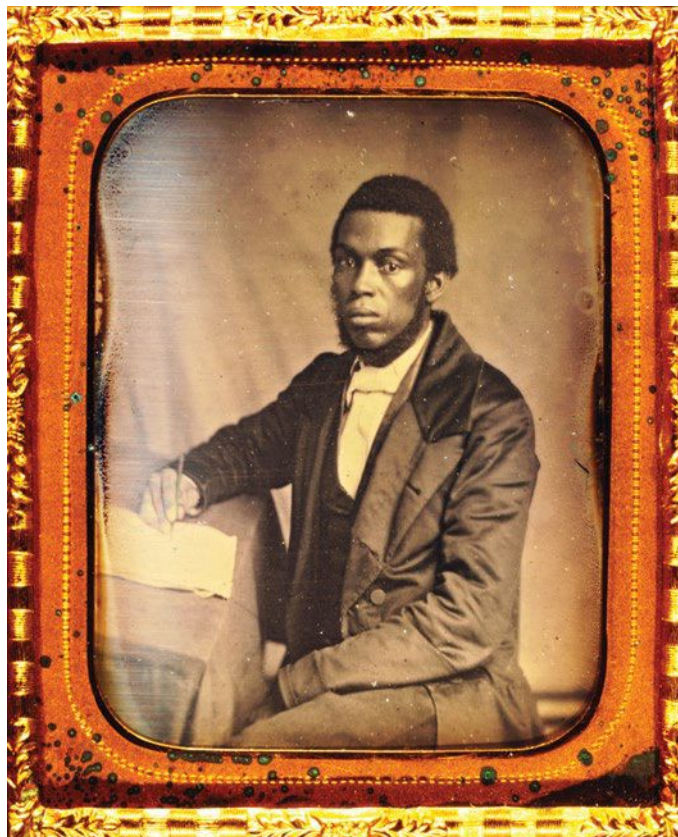
Soon, Hartford residents began paying a visit to his studio to get their portrait made.

"Though dark the day, and fearful as is the tide, oppression is rolling over us, we are certain that it is but the presage of a more glorious morrow."





Urias Africannus McGill, an American immigrant to Liberia.



James Skivring Smith, a physician who had migrated to Liberia in 1833.

“I maintain that clinging to long cherished prejudices and fostering hopes that can never be realized, the leaders of the colored people in this country have failed to discharge a great and important duty to their race.”

Some of them included Lydia H Sigourney, one of 19th century's most prolific poets, and of the first American women published poets, political leader Eliphalet Adams Bulkeley and radical abolitionist John Brown.

Washington's daguerreotypes are nuanced and showcase his skill as a portraitist. Because of his education, he understood light and composition. Many of his photographs have his subjects captured from the side, a style that was unseen at the time. He did not make images for the sake of creating them... one can see the thought that has gone behind each photograph.

Change of Pace

Even though business was booming, Washington would not turn a blind eye towards the rampant slavery and the atrocities that were faced by his fellow African Americans in the country. In 1853, he decided to move to Liberia, Africa.

Before he left, he published a small announcement in the *Hartford Daily Courant* that said that he was retiring from the business, “not from any want of further success or patronage, but for the purpose of

foreign travel, and to mingle in other scenes of activity and usefulness.” He soon made his journey to Liberia, to start life all over again. ▶

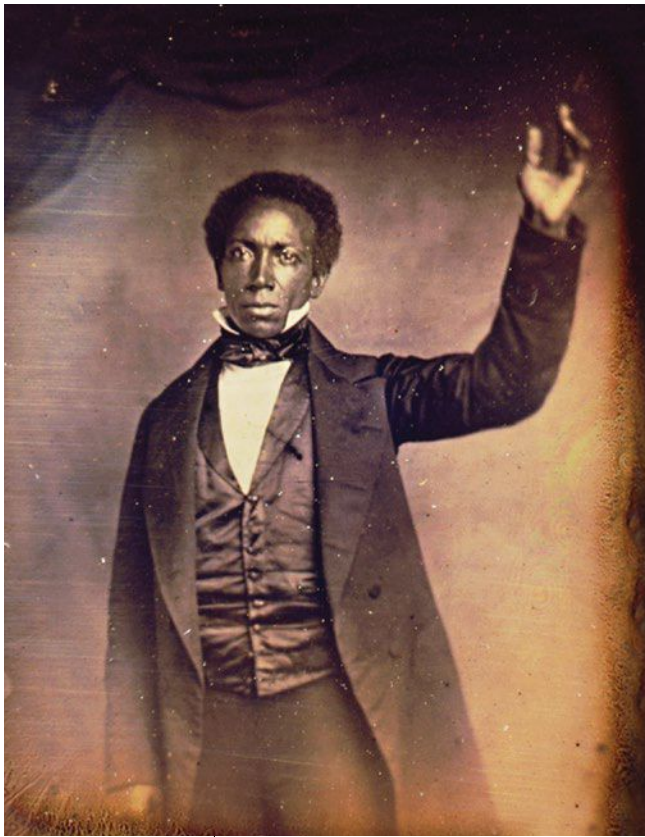
Ⓢ Chauncy H Hicks, chief clerk for a Liberian merchant.



GREAT MASTERS

Radical abolitionist, John Brown, who believed that armed insurrection was the only way to overthrow the slavery in the United States.





➔ Edward James Roye, who owned a successful shipping business.

Making the Move

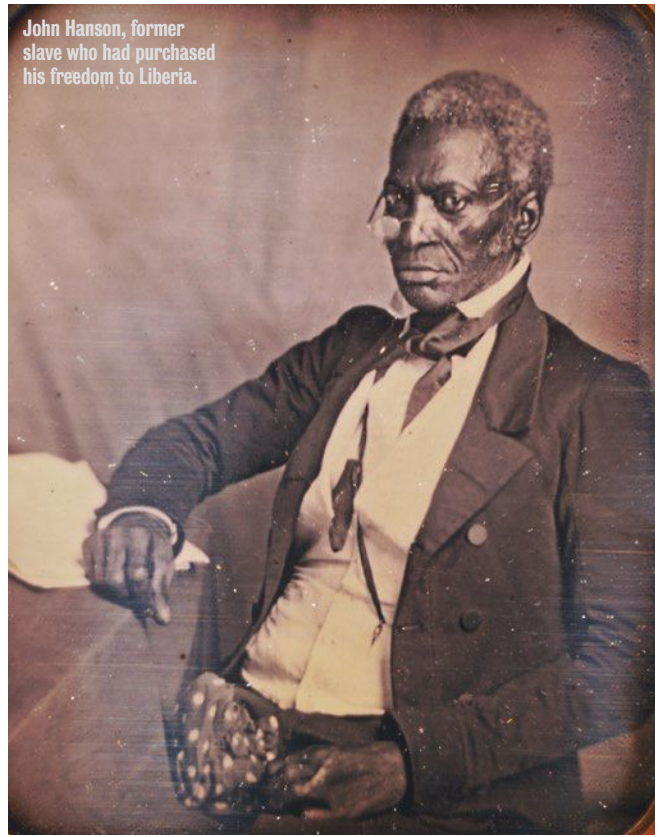
In a documented letter to *The Tribune*, Washington wrote about 'colonising' Africa, as a man of colour. He said, "I have been unable to get rid of a conviction, long since entertained and often expressed, that if the colored people of this country ever find a home on earth for the development of their manhood and intellect, it will first be in Liberia or some other parts of Africa. We must mark out an independent course and become the architects of our own fortunes." In Liberia, he experienced the kind of freedom he could not, back in USA.

Setting Up Again

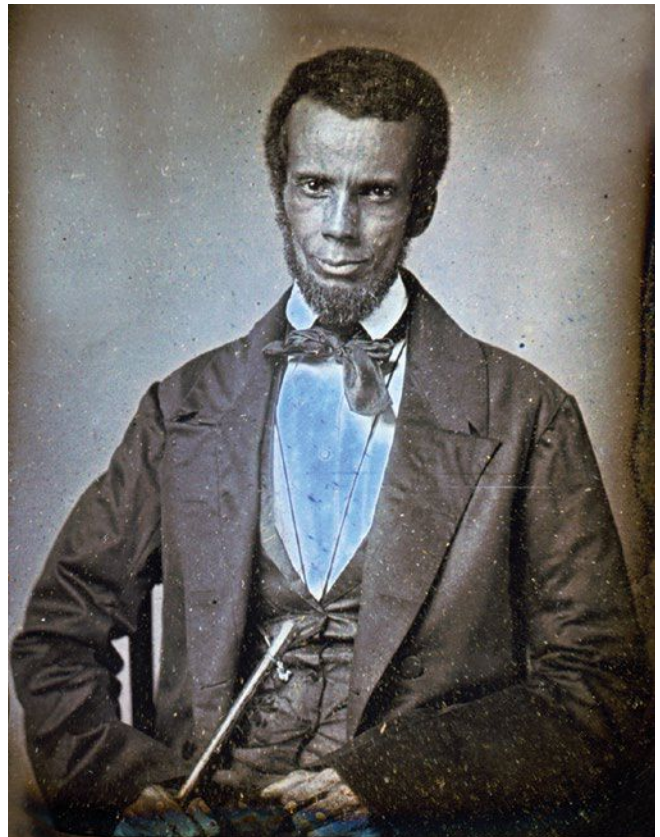
Washington built another successful studio in Liberia. He continued to correspond with Lydia H Sigourney, and even sent her 50kgs of sugar produced by his own crop of sugarcane. He eventually gave up photography and became a farmer, thereby fulfilling his wish to pursue other avenues to gain the most out of life.

Transcending Time – stronger connect

Despite his important contributions to photography and civil rights, Augustus Washington remains faceless. However, his work is not forgotten, and is relevant even to this day, not just for African Americans, but for every oppressed person. Washington did



John Hanson, former slave who had purchased his freedom to Liberia.



➔ Unidentified man.

not shout from the rooftops about his beliefs. In his own quiet way, he chose the course of his own life, and is a source of inspiration for me, today. 📷

"It has been my constant study to learn how I might best contribute to elevate the social and political position of the oppressed and unfortunate people with whom I am identified."

A selection of some of the best images from the Indian mainstream media

1000 Words

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Salman Ansari,
DNA

A Pile of Metal

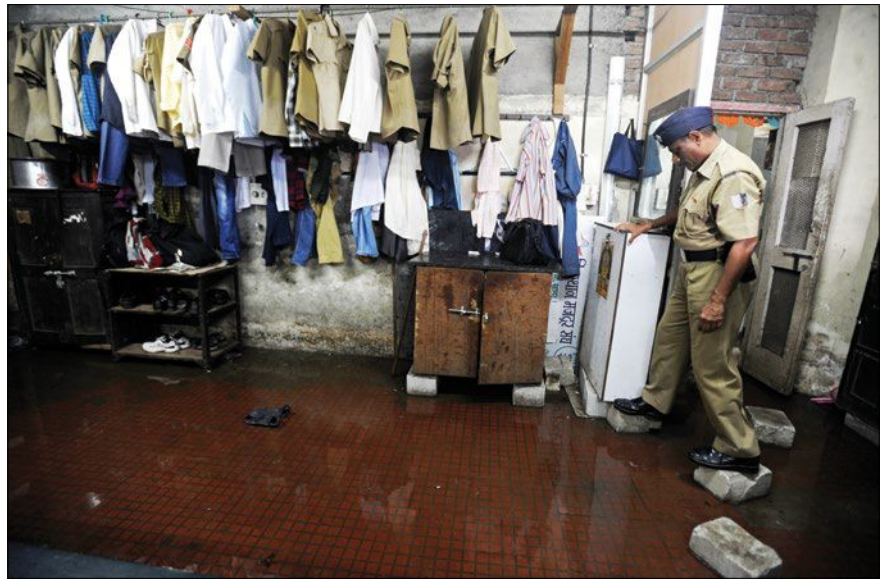
A labourer collects iron cuttings at an industrial area in Reay Road, Mumbai. Over the last few months, the prices of scrap aluminum, stainless steel and brass have fallen. The manner in which the mounds of cuttings have been framed convey how easily available scrap metal is now.



The Water Wives

In the drought-stricken village of Denganmal in Maharashtra, men often marry twice and thrice, in order to have a wife whose only job is to fetch water. Seen here are Sakharam Bhagat, and his wives, Tuki, Sakhri and Bhaagi (from left to right). Besides conveying the environs of the village, the image successfully offers a portrait of a peculiar family whose members are bound by functionality as much as by emotional bonds.

Ritesh Uttamchandani,
OPEN Magazine



Stinking Up Duty

Salman Ansari,
DNA

For the last five years, the security guards of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation have had to tiptoe on concrete slabs to make their way into a room where they have their lunch and where they change their uniform.

This room is regularly flooded by gutter water. The image is a poignant comment on the terrible conditions that civil service personnel have to endure.

Off Track

On 19 March, the Varanasi-Dehradun Express overshot a signal and did not stop at Bachrawan station. It hit a track dead end and resulted in the deaths of 32 people. The skewed angle, the train coach lifted clean off the tracks, the debris and strewn luggage offer the vantage point of a possible survivor.

Vishal Srivastava,
The Indian Express



WPOY 2014-15 Nominees

We have returned with India's biggest wedding photography awards, the **Better Photography Wedding Photographer of the Year 2014-15**.

The Better Photography Wedding Photographer of the Year awards were initiated in 2009, and the contest has grown to great proportions ever since. The awards are back again this year, in an attempt to find the best wedding photography talent in the country today. Going through the scores of entries that we received this year, it was abundantly clear that we were going to have a difficult time in shortlisting the nominees.

The Making of a Wedding

A wedding is not just the celebration of a marriage, it is the solemnity with which two souls join their lives in perfect harmony. This is where wedding photographers truly shine, by capturing the pivotal moments that make each wedding a memorable

one. Better Photography Wedding Photographer of the Year awards was set up to celebrate the tenacity, vision and execution of the camera magicians who make a wedding unforgettable.

Six Exciting Themes, An Extensive Judging Process

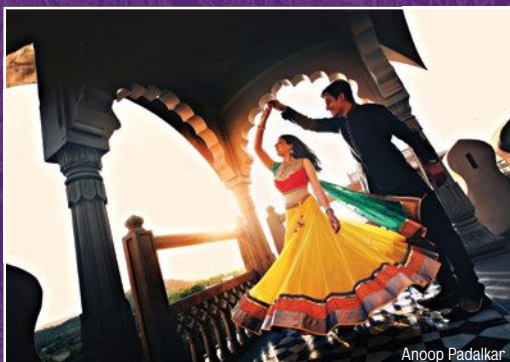
We received an overwhelming response of 18,678 entries from 5123 individual participants in six different themes. Continuing with last year's judging module, this time around, our panel consisted of 117 judges. Married couples, parents of brides and grooms, photographers belonging to various genres, renowned wedding photographers, stylists and fashion designers from all over the world were all part of the judging process. Without further ado, we present to you the top six nominees from each category.

**Better
Photography
Wedding
Photographer
of the year 2014-2015**

BRIDE & GROOM PORTRAITURE



Sanghamitra Sarkar



Anoop Padalkar



Kumaran Rajarathinam

Nominees:

ANOOP PADALKAR
Navi Mumbai

KINJAL MAJITHIA
Mumbai

KUMARAN RAJARATHINAM
Coimbatore

SANGHAMITRA SARKAR
Kalyani

SANOJ KUMAR
Kochi

SULABH KALA
Jodhpur

FAMILY AND FRIENDS



Amanpreet Kaur



William Chang



Karthik Balasubramanian



Thurga Rajasekar

EMOTIONS



Sutirtha Basu



George Gupta



Kamal Rana



Shantanu Bedarkar

**Better
Photography**
Wedding
Photographer
of the year 2014-2015

Nominees:

ABHIMANYU SHARMA
Gurgaon
AMANPREET KAUR
New Delhi
ANSHUM MANDORE
Pune
KARTHIK BALASUBRAMANIAN
Chennai
THURGA RAJASEKAR
Chennai
WILLIAM CHANG
New Delhi

**Better
Photography**
Wedding
Photographer
of the year 2014-2015

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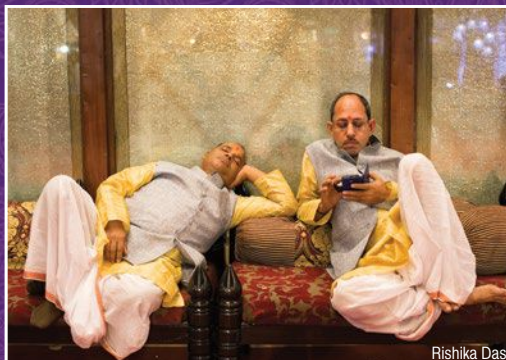
Nominees:

GEORGE GUPTA
New Delhi
KAMAL RANA
New Delhi
MANPREET SINGH KHALSA
Sonapat
NITIN DANGWAL
Panchkula
SHANTANU BEDARKAR
Pune
SUTIRTHA BASU
Kolkata

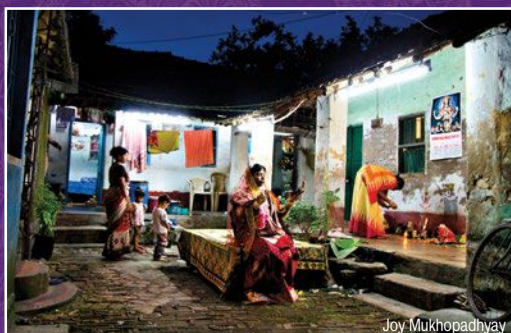
BEHIND THE SCENES OR OFFBEAT



Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee



Rishika Das



Joy Mukhopadhyay



Mama Lalmuanpuia

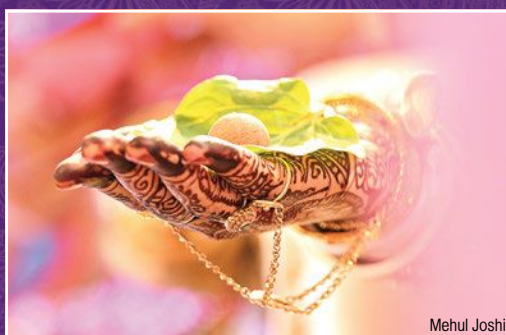
FINER WEDDING DETAILS OR STILL LIFE



Bobby Sharma



Samik Ghosh



Mehul Joshi

**Better
Photography**
Wedding
Photographer
of the year 2014-2015

Nominees:

DHRUBAJYOTI
BHATTACHARJEE
Kolkata

GHANSHYAM KAHAR
Vadodara

JHALAK ASHWIN
Mumbai

JOY MUKHOPADHYAY
Kolkata

MAMA LALMUANPUIA
Aizawl

RISHIKA DAS
Kolkata

**Better
Photography**
Wedding
Photographer
of the year 2014-2015

Nominees:

BOBBY SHARMA
Ludhiana

KARTHIK R YADAV
Chennai

KARTIK JASTI
New Delhi

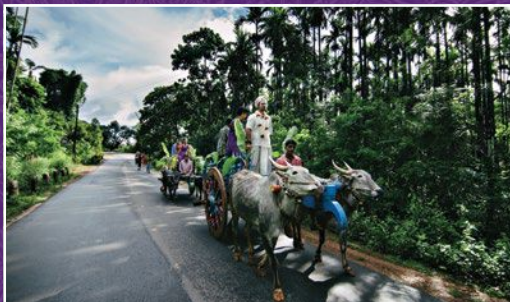
MEHUL JOSHI
Jamnagar

SACHIN SAINI
Alwar

SAMIK GHOSH
Kolkata

**Better
Photography**
Wedding
Photographer
of the year 2014-2015

PHOTOSERIES ON A SINGLE WEDDING



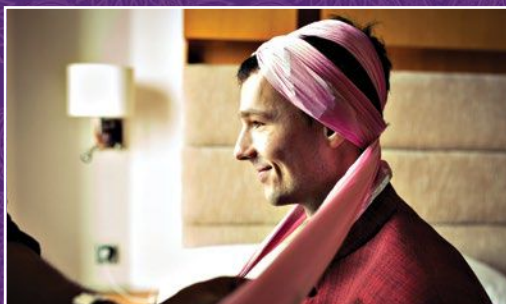
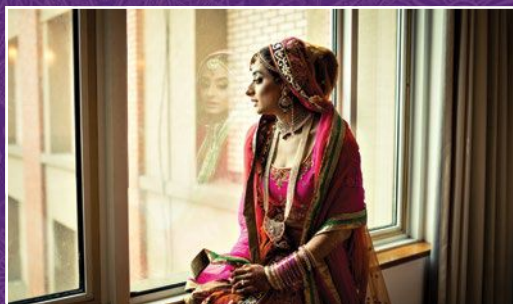
Nominees:

- ABHISHEK SCARIYA
Bengaluru
- ASHOK ARSH
Chennai
- RADHIKA PANDIT
Ahmedabad
- RAM MORRISON
Bengaluru
- RISHABH SOOD
New Delhi
- SUBINYO DAS
New Delhi

PHOTOSERIES ON A SINGLE WEDDING

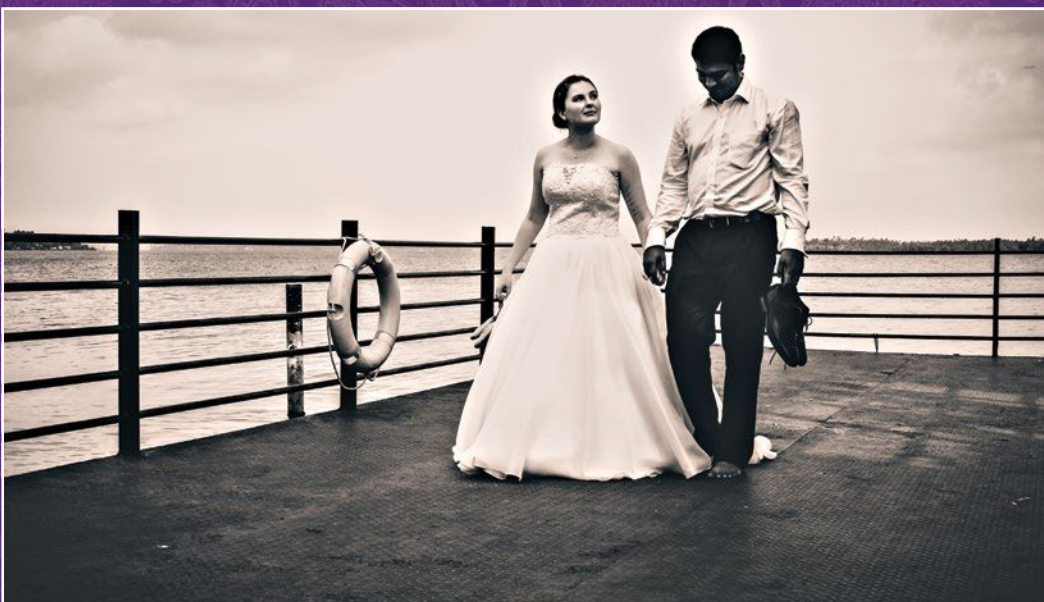


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All photographs by Rishabh Sood

PHOTOSERIES ON A SINGLE WEDDING



All photographs by VRam Morrison

Your Pictures

This month, we challenged our readers to capture the strength of women, and to think beyond stereotypes. Here is a look at the best images from the contest.

The Prize:

Grand Prize Winner: The winning image gets the coveted *Better Photography's* Collector's Edition 12 Pocket Guide set, which are comprehensive guides on how to make the best pictures in every genre, ranging from sports, wildlife to festivals and colours.

To see all the nominees images for this contest, visit www.betterphotography.in

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➔ Body Language

Shashank Shekhar, Noida

"When I found out about the theme, I decided that I wanted to shoot for it. And so, when I was visiting my relatives and this opportunity presented itself, I was really happy. What drew me to the frame were the various expressions of the women, and importantly, the confidence and devil-may-care attitude of the lady in the foreground."

Camera: Fujifilm FinePix S2950

Aperture: f/3.1

Shutterspeed: 1/30sec
ISO: 100



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& Chargers,
Photographic
& Studio
Accessories



Studio Flash **DSF-600PRO**

Guide No.
64

16
Channel
Inbuilt
Trigger

**Speed
Portrait**



LCD Monitor **DLM-007**

Input & Output
with 1/8" Socket
& 1/4" Input

For DSLR
& Video
Camera's

2 Level
Adjustment
Shots Adjusters
Standard
& Story

7" Inch
Clip-On
Pen & Tilt
Function



LED Video Light **LED-D600**

Brightness
Adjustment

Battery
Power Test

16.9
Wide Screen



Infrared
Remote
to Control Functions
of Video Light



Flash Speedlite **DFL-1000T**

G.M.
568
ISO 100

10000
Battery

TTL
For Canon
/ Nikon



Tripod CUM Monopod **DTR-495**

1 Level
Adjustment
Shots Adjusters
Standard
& Story

2 Level
Adjustment
Shots Adjusters
Standard
& Story

3 Level
Adjustment
Shots Adjusters
Standard
& Story

4 Level
Adjustment
Shots Adjusters
Standard
& Story

Winner





Honourable Mention

◀ Within

Mithun Saha, Gangarampur

"I was at a village fair in the Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal, when I spotted this scene. What captivated me about the reflection, was the fact that while one can see a man in the foreground, it is a woman who is being reflected in the mirror. To me, this symbolised the feminine aspect that I believe, resides within every man."

Camera: Canon EOS 60D

Aperture: f/3.5

Shutterspeed: 1/30sec

ISO: 2500



Honourable Mention

Honourable Mention

◀ Her Strength is in Giving

Lozima Subba, Sikkim

"Often, I isolate myself in my room and work on a photoseries. This theme evoked a similar reaction in me. In order to make a portrait of femininity, I did not need to have a person in the frame. The pot, the fabric, the smoke and the resulting endless flow of motion symbolised the endless giving nature of women to me."

Camera: Canon EOS 60D

Aperture: f/9

Shutterspeed: 13sec

ISO: 400

Participate in the
‘Your Pictures Contest’ on
betterphotography.in/contests
to win a chance to be
featured in the magazine and
win exciting prizes!

📷 The Epitome

Soham Dutta, Kolkata

“To me, Goddess Durga is the epitome of female strength. And so, when I saw this scene, with the face of Durga on the magazine, covering my relative’s face, I couldn’t help but make a picture.”

Camera: Panasonic LUMIX
DMC-FZ200
Aperture: f/2.8
Shutterspeed: 1/13sec
ISO: 200

📷 Stitching the Nation

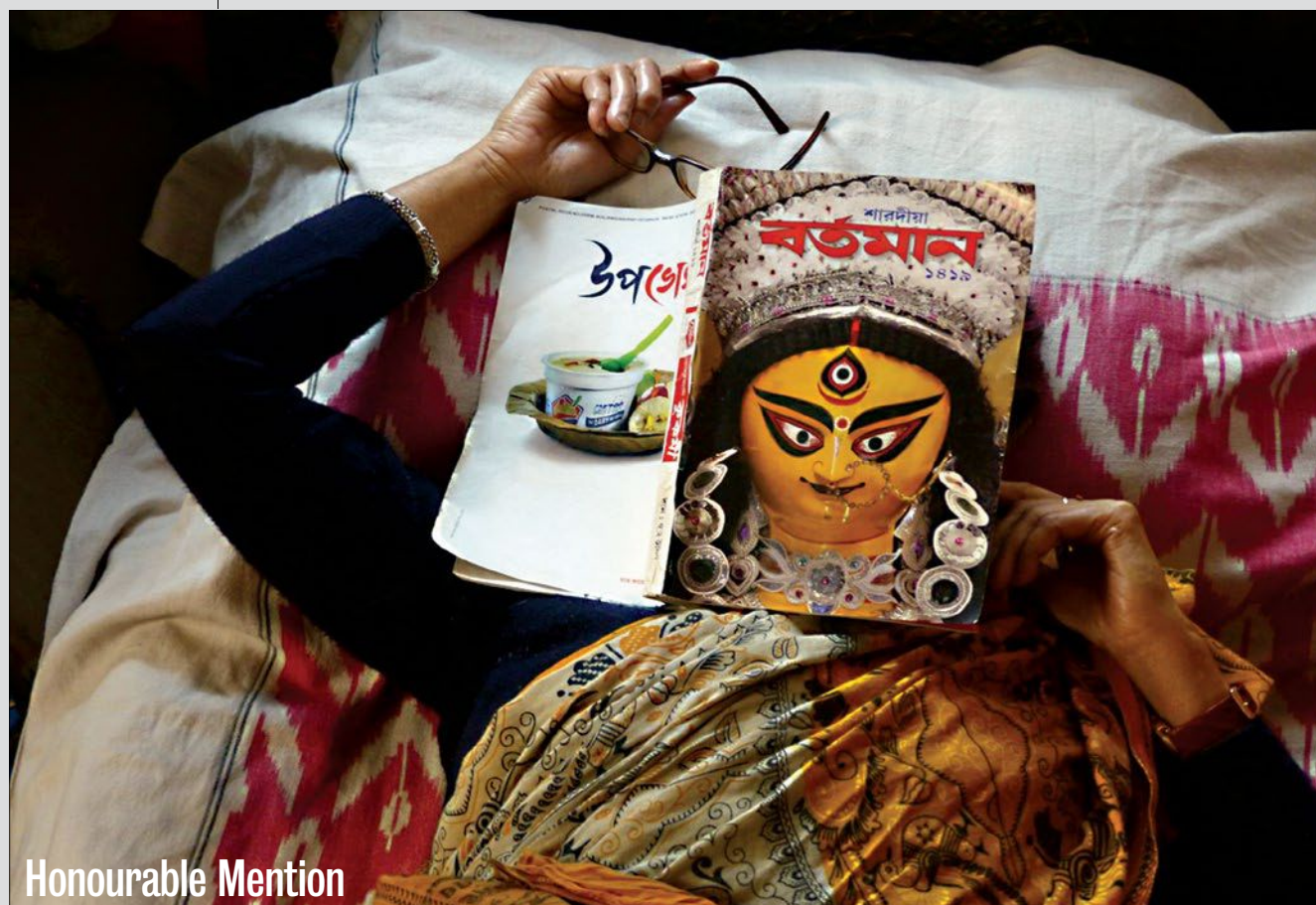
Mujib Rahiman, Dubai

“To me, this is the strength of women—to carve a professional niche for themselves, to demand equal rights and to grasp success despite all odds, in the nation they belong to.”

Camera: iPhone 6
Aperture: f/2.2
Shutterspeed: 1/30sec
ISO: 40



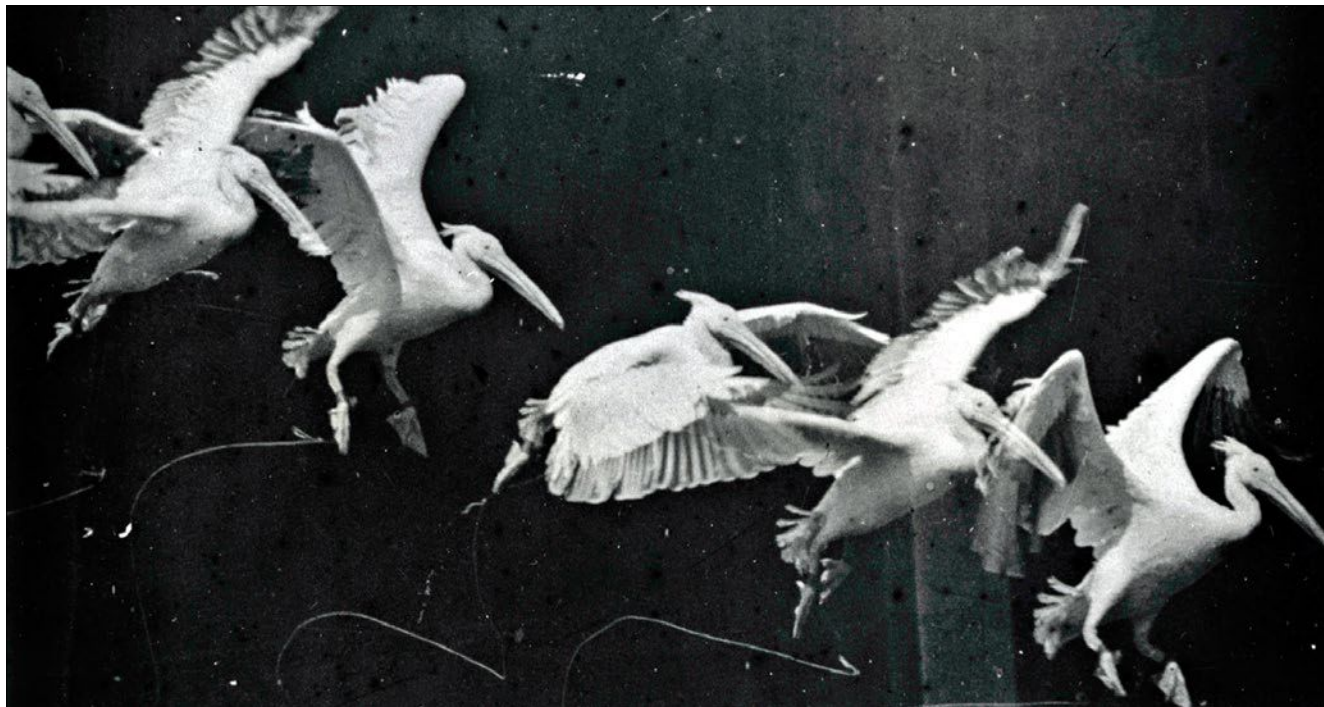
Honourable Mention



Honourable Mention

The Story Behind the Picture

158




Photograph by:
Étienne-Jules Marey
Image Source:
Wikimedia Commons

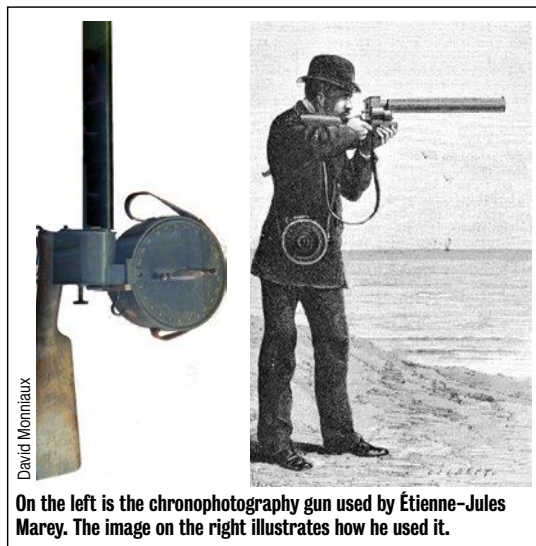
Pioneering the Art of Multiple Exposures

The early 19th century saw a massive amount of innovation and new discoveries in science and its various facets. One such pioneer was Étienne-Jules Marey, who was on his own pathbreaking journey in France. He has been credited with the development of several technologies in physical instrumentation, cardiology and even aviation. His most important creation, however, was a gun.

This gun wasn't used to kill... it was used to make photographs. In 1882, Jules Marey came up with the technique of chronophotography, which allowed him to make 12 exposures on the same frame.

He built a special instrument, shaped like a gun, to shoot these images. With it, he recorded the movements of animals and birds, in the effort to understand the nuances of their movement.

Also, he had already recorded a horse's gait two years before Eadweard Muybridge did, but he never publicised his photos, instead transferring his results to a bar graph for an expert to read. When he saw Muybridge's photos in a magazine, he realised the aesthetic importance of the images he was making. 



David Monniaux

On the left is the chronophotography gun used by Étienne-Jules Marey. The image on the right illustrates how he used it.